LITHUANIAN
Folk Art

By J. Baltrušaitis · Ph.D.

LITHUANIAN FOLK ART

by

JURGIS BALTRUŠAITIS · PH · D ·

256 ILLUSTRATIONS

EDITOR T · J · VIZGIRDA · ARCHITECT

LITHUANIA · COUNTRY AND NATION III

These books (see inside wrapper) have been published under extremely difficult conditions, the rich materials for illustrations and texts being inaccessible behind the Iron Curtain. The only materials available were some photographs, newspaper-cuttings etc. The technical difficulties in present-day Germany as to blocks, colours, paper and printing prevented the Editor from realising his aims. The Editor shall feel grateful if the Reader will kindly overlock the unavoidable deficiencies. He expresses his sincere thanks to Dr. J. Baltrušaitis for the trust he placed in him in connexion with publication

1.—5.000

Published under Military Government License. All Rights reserved and Copyright 1948 by T. J. Vizgirda. Illustrations printed by Münchner Graphische Kunstanstalten, Munich. Text printed by J. G. Weiss'sche Buchdruckerei, Munich. First Edition. One hundred Copies are numbered. Germany, 1948

CONTENTS

Introduction 9

Architecture 14

Crosses and Chapels 36

Sculpture 54

Painting and Engraving 62

Domestic Art 68

Bibliography 79

List of Illustrations 80

Illustrations 81

Drawings by A. Jaroševičius, E. Krasauskas, A. Rúkštelé (from „Lietuvių Liaudies Menas" by P. Galauné) and F. Wittlinger

INTRODUCTION

The history of a European country and the life of her people's tradition do not follow a uniform course. On one hand there is a succession of eras, a succession of styles and fashions, on the other hand, there is stability uninfluenced by events. On the one hand there is precipitancy and haste, and on the other hand slow and regular development. Evolution has two rhythms. It is not a question of different levels or of unequal values. These are the two faces of the same civilization. These two so very distinct parts however, are not without reciprocal action. Historic currents leave their traces on the permanent foundation and deposit their sediment there. Under its influence this foundation begins its course of evolution. It models itself under the influence of these alluvial deposits in the same way as does a river's bed. Human geology is composed of a number of strata. The ties

between the surface and the underground layers change according to surroundings, background and era. Sometimes they tighten, at other times they have no balanced relationship. They seldom coalesce. Each stratum has its own measure of motion and time.

A branch of the Indo-European family which to-day speaks one of Europe's oldest languages, the Lithuanians, settled away from the great travelled routes, were spared for a long period from revolutionary changes. The Iron Age was prolonged until the 12th century of our era. For all that, it was not an archaic culture. The objects found in graves are of an advanced type. Textile industry, metal objects, ceramics, fortifications are testimony of a clearly defined social structure and a political organization. According to the Ancients these populations were industrious and peaceful and devoted to a rustic life. The road of amber from the deposits along the banks of their rivers, connected them with the Mediterranean world Gradually exchanges became more frequent. The pressure of the Goths did not directly affect these homes, but nevertheless, its repercussions were felt. In the period of migration the frontiers and the interior positions became more precise. The first strongholds called *"piliakalniai"* — were erected at strategic points. Soon Scandinavians and Russians appeared upon the scene. King Olaf of Sweden attacked the city of Apulia, — the Apuolé of to-day — Kiev menaced the people of Nemunas (Niemen), but later became a goal of Lithuanian conquests. In the West, Rimbert, a monk of Corbie, was one of the first in the IXth century to report on a township called Apuolé.

These different movements did not destroy the unity of development, but on the contrary strengthened it. Subsistence of faiths and practices continued. Entrance into history proper did not put an end to their existence. It was not a rupture, but a new phase. The prehistoric gods were not dead. For a long period adoration of the forces of nature, the stars, the thunder and all the genii of field and forest persisted. Princes were baptized in the 13th and 14th centuries, but the people's religion remained unimpaired. Penetrating the country, Christianity had to face the local myths. Frequently it mixed with them: Christ and *"Perkúnas"*, the Thunderer, had the same worshippers. It was the same favor which was transferred from the one to the other. This fidelity did not mean retrogression. Lithuania had her historic mission. She marks the limit of the barbarian

invasion; she is the principal obstacle against Teutonic hegemony. In 1239 Mindaugas had taken possession of Smolensk. He consolidated his positions in the South-East and dared to oppose the Order of Chivalry which was already master of Courland and East Prussia. In order to disarm his enemies he became a convert in 1251. The knights accompanied by the Bishop of Culm, brought him the grand ducal crown. But only a short time later the struggle was resumed and Mindaugas relapsed to his old faith.

The country was invaded. Gediminas freed it in 1320. But this striking success gave rise to new dangers. A coalition was forming against the victorious Lithuanians; Germans, French, Spaniards, Czechs and Danes prepared to attack the pagans .But at that moment the *"kunigaikštis"*, the Grand Duke had himself baptized. Secure in the North he turned again to the South East towards Kiev, thus laying the foundation of the Lithuanian empire. In 1341 he was killed by the knights of the Teutonic Order. After a period of troubles his two sons, Algirdas and Keistutis, divided the power between themselves. Under the reign of Keistutis' son, Vytautas the Great, Lithuania reached the apex of power. By the Treaty of Vilnius (Vilna) in 1401, Vytautas was recognized as Grand Duke. Within a few years he re-established and enlarged the empire, which now stretched from the Black Sea to the Baltic. A Lithuanian governor was established in Kiev. Lithuanian strongholds were erected along the course of the Dnieper and the Bug protecting the route from Palanga to Odessa. The Grand Duke intervened even in the elections of the Khans of Tartary. In Vilnius he played the part of a great European sovereign. In 1410, allied with the Poles, the Lithuanians crushed the Teutonic Order of Knighthood at Tannenberg and the Order never recovered from this defeat.

In the course of the 15th century the relations with Poland became still more close. A number of alliances were negotiated, which culminated in the Treaty of Lublin. The Grand Duke Jagellon married Queen Hedwig of Anjou. The two countries were united under the same sceptre, but each of them retained its government and its institutions. In 1569 the union of the two states was realized. Lithuania preserved an autonomous administration, but from that date on she shared the fate of her neighbour. The Grand Duchy is still to be found on some maps of the 18th century, but after the successive division of Poland, it fell into the hands of the Russians.

During this period the social conflicts rooted in the past gradually grew more serious. The mass of the peasantry and the provincial nobility separated from each other and became two antagonistic worlds. The one became absorbed in itself and remained true to its secular traditions. The other, influenced by Poland, endeavoured to take an ever increasing part in the intellectual life of the West.

Under Russian domination an era of decay began, which was marked by revolts, repressions and disasters. The Great Army appeared as a liberator, and Napoleon proclaimed the independence of the country from Vilnius. Lithuanian regiments joined his troops. But this was only an episode of the struggle. Further insurrections took place in 1831 and 1863. They were followed by deportations to Siberia and a mass emigration to the United States. More than a million, one third of the Lithuanians, found shelter and a new home in the latter country. The treasures of art which were collected by the nobility were dispersed and destroyed. In 1865 a decree was issued prohibiting publications in the Lithuanian language. Centres of resistance however were successfully established in the Russian universities, as also in Königsberg, in London and in America. Students and smugglers clandestinely introduced prohibited books, periodicals and calendars. Theatrical performances were held in barns. The folklore, the ancient folk songs served as a rallying sign. But it was only after World War I, after having suffered a long German occupation, that the country recovered its independence. Twenty years of fervent and pious work showed what a small but free nation is able to accomplish. The country was happy at last, — World War II destroyed this. Renewed occupations and deportations, a new exodus, destruction by fire and iron, subjugation by neighbouring nations succeeded one another without interruption. Few peoples have had so tragic a fate, even in war-ravaged Europe. But Lithuania will not be subdued. She believes in the power of justice.

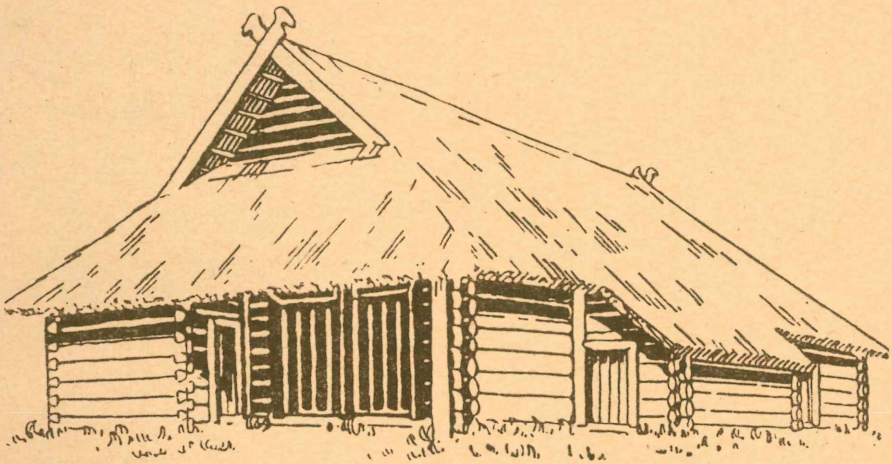
Such is the outline of the history of Lithuania. All through the tempest of the ages the people continued to perform its tasks. But it did not remain insensible to the vicissitudes of the changing eras. New forms of life are grafted on secular traditions. Sun and thunder worship gives way to medieval Christianity, but still survives in the *"dainos"*. The currents of Western art succeed each other and leave deep traces. Contacts with

sometimes far off centres enrich the technique. But on the permanent background of traditional culture, the new elements are themselves transformed. Values undergo chronological changes and their foundations are reconstructed.

Such is the eternal play of these two opposing forces: stability versus motion.

ARCHITECTURE

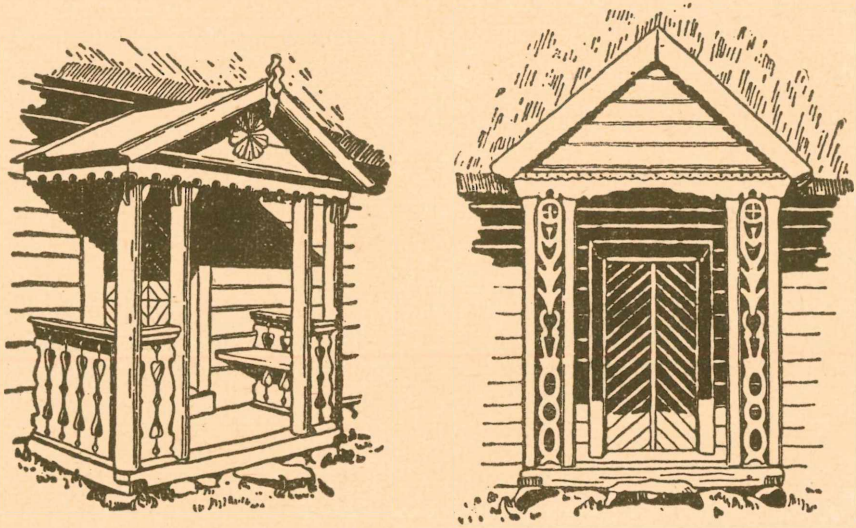
In all forest-clad countries the dwellings of the peasants resemble each other. The most usual type is the low-walled cabin, built of logs under a roof sloping towards the front and the back. This shape is familiar in three quarters of Europe, but Lithuania preserves very ancient patterns of it. The simplest form of such buildings consists of one room. They stand on four cornerstones or poles. They are mentioned in certain documents of the 16th century, but the tradition goes still further back to prehistoric buildings. The timber framing is fitted together without the aid of metal parts, by joggle joints — *"raktas"*, — or by a central key way cut in the beam with dents, *"iškarpa"*. The house has only two openings, a door and one attic window. The roof is protected by a thick layer of straw. Inside, a hearth, a bed, a chest, a table and few seats



1. "Numas" of Žemaičiai

constitute the modest fittings of a Spartan way of living. Such was without doubt the Black House, black with smoke and soot, mentioned by Caspar Hannenberger in 1595, and the houses built on the rectilinear plan, traces of which have been discovered during excavations at Dukštas. Such was certainly the primitive Nordic cabin.

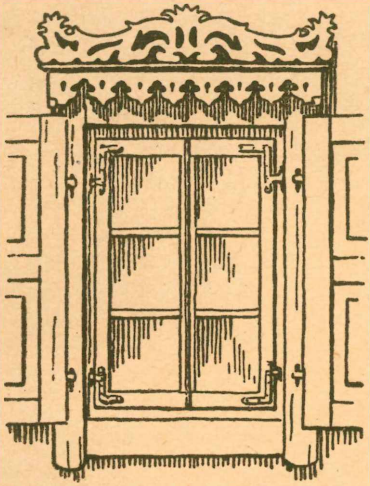
The twin system of dwelling was very often used and shows several variations. The first addition consists of a terrace. The arrangement of the interior was changed, the number of windows was increased. Sometimes the one room, was also divided by a partition, but the general lines of the plan were maintained. If other buildings were added this was done in the centre, in the direction of the reception hall. Sometimes it is only one wing, sometimes a real transept was built. A special type was evolved in Žemaitija (Lower Lithuania, Samogitia). If a family became wealthy it used to abandon its old home — which henceforward served as a barn — and to build a new and vaster dwelling, the *"numas"*, consisting of two equal parts: the stable and the human dwelling. As in Biblical times man and beast are sheltered under the same roof. The principal room is spacious and contains the hearth. Another room used to be built on the Southern side. It had no communication with the interior and served as a bedroom for the landlord and for young married couples. On the same side there

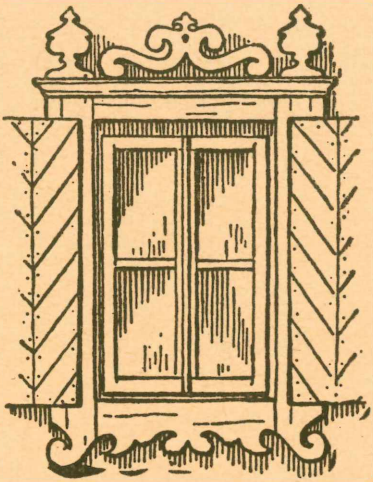


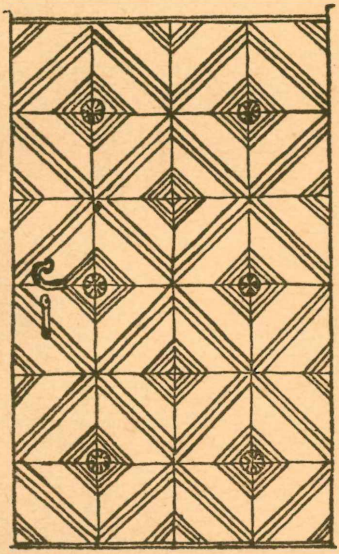
2.—3. Porches

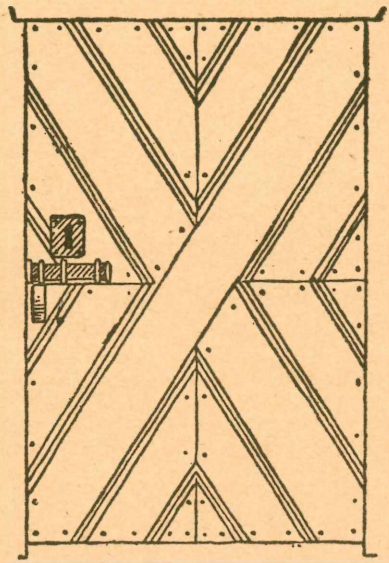
was a large terrace where in summer the inhabitants could take their meals and sleep.

Decoration was generally scarce and usually limited to the front of the house. Perforated boards embellished the cornices, the cross beams and the window frames. They were cut in saw pattern or in a design of intersecting segments of a circle. They were decorated with rows of hearts and various other ornaments. Sometimes birds or other arimals surrounding a vase were placed on both sides of the holy tree of the Orient, the "Hom", which is perfectly recognizable. The oculi are surrounded by rosaces. The bodies of the pillars were often decorated with spheres or tores placed one above the other. The balustrades imitated the carvings on the rail posts. On the façade circular designs were often used. On the gable two intersecting branches representing horses or birds showed the ancient zoomorphic combinations we find so often in Romanesque sculpture. They were believed to protect the dwellers against ruin, disease and fires. According to legend, evil spirits flying over a village only entered dwellings which lacked this ornament on which they could perch and take breath.

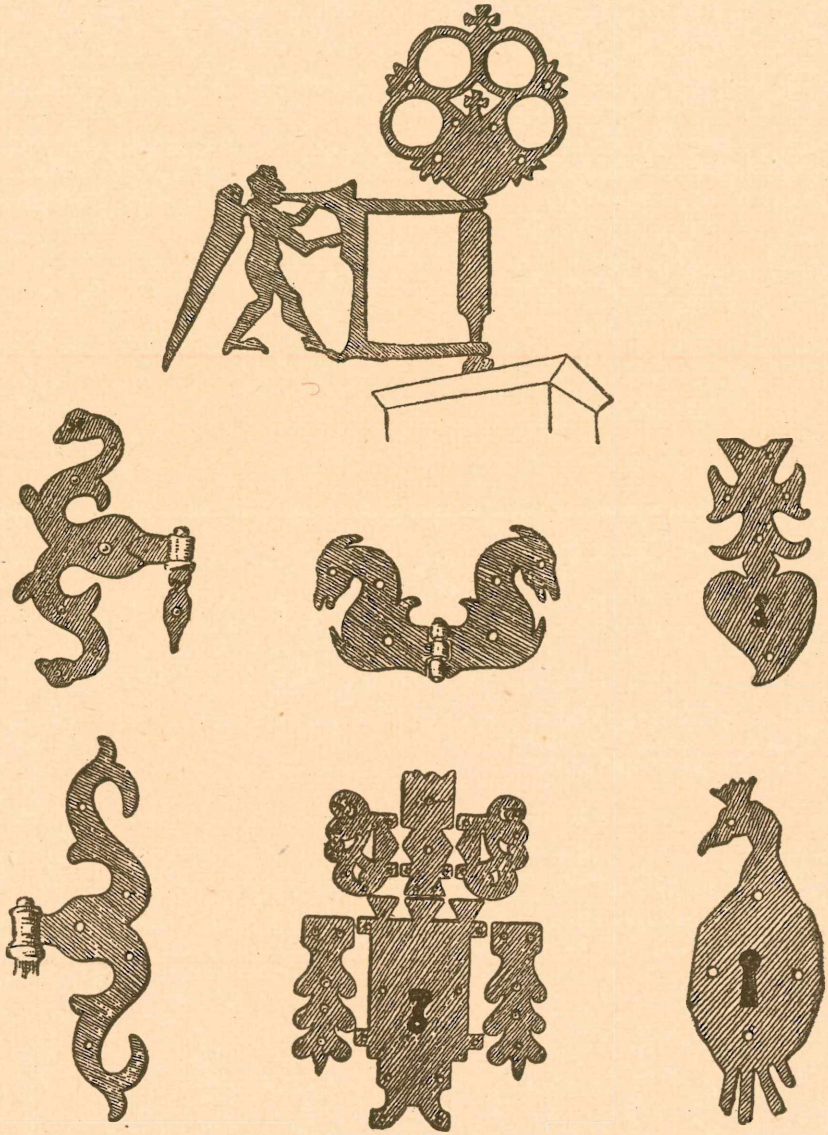








4.—7. Windows and Doors

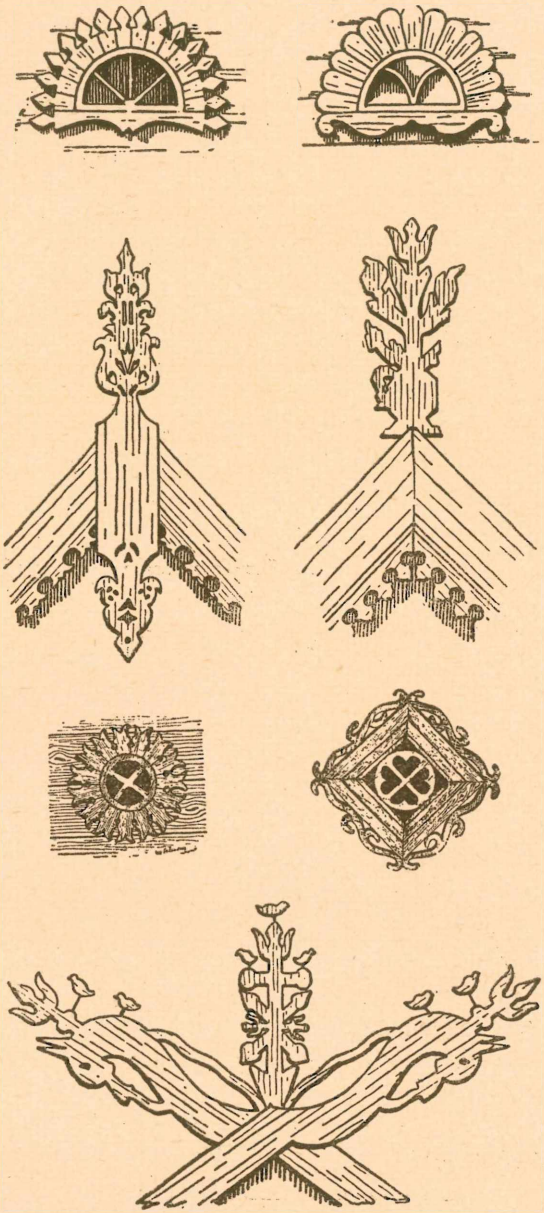


8.—14. Iron Door Mountings (cf. Chapter on Domestic Art)

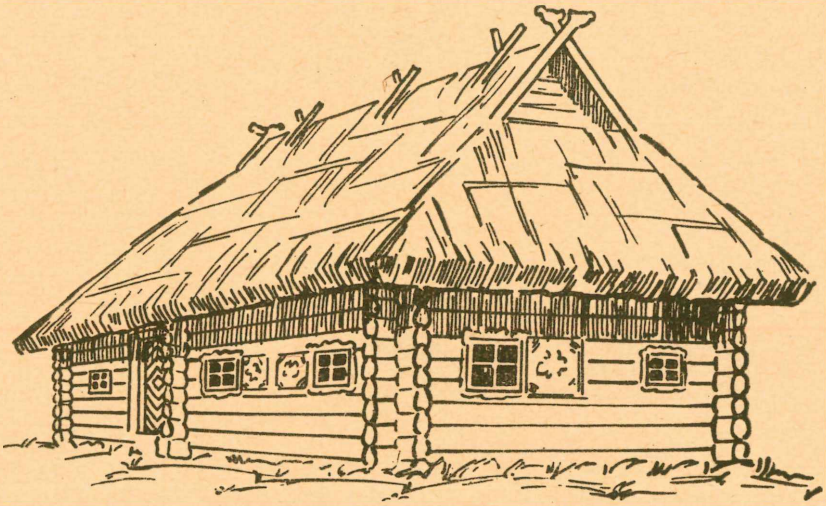
Such were the simple dwellings in which the peasant still succeeded in improving his condition of life and in introducing some progress. All these designs repeat themselves with remarkable constancy through generations and they are also to be found in buildings adapted to modern requirements.

When it became necessary to enlarge the dwelling-house, the attached storehouse gave rise to interesting architectural developments. Such houses are called *"klétis"*, a name derived from *kali* — wood in Sanscrit — compare with the Greek *kality* and the Celtic *kliath*, words more than a thousand years old.

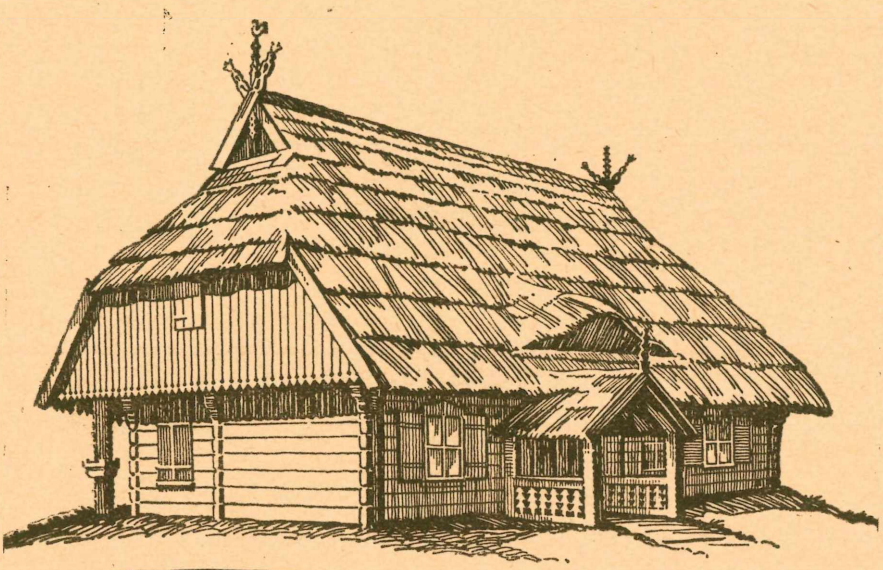
The roof is extended on one side or projected over the gable and sup-



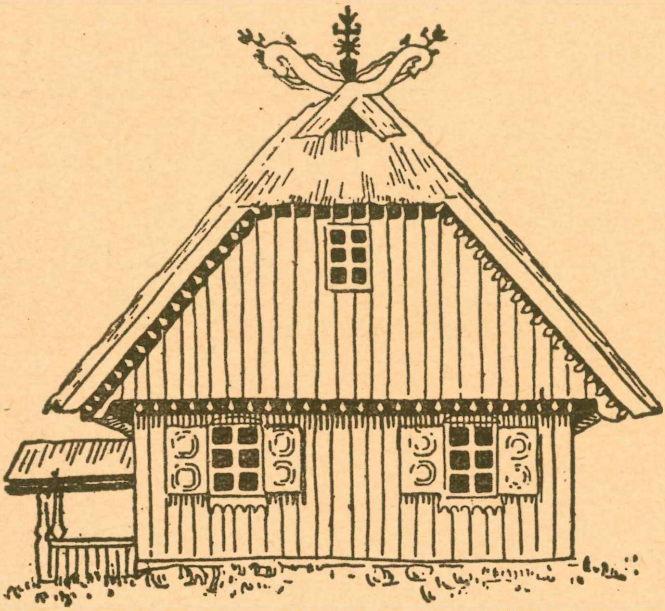
15.—21. Gable Ornaments and Windows



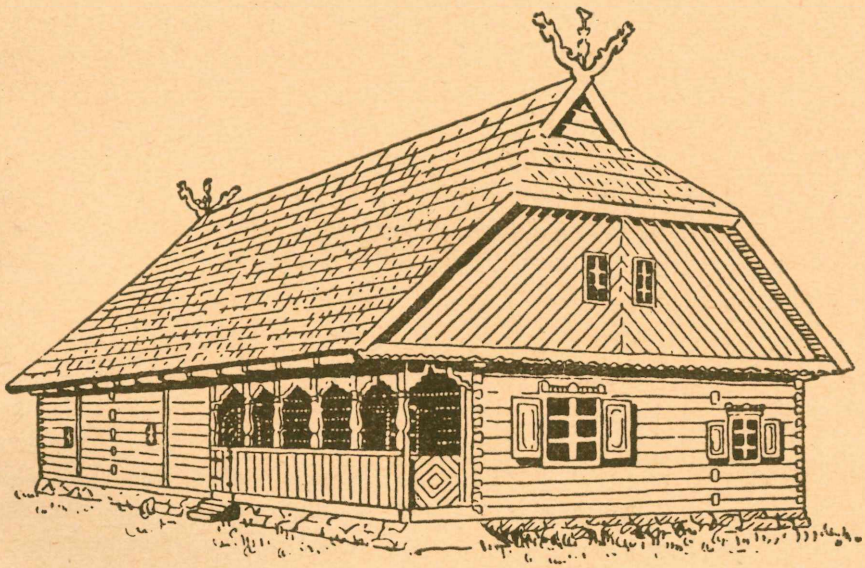
22. Dwelling-House, District of Alytus



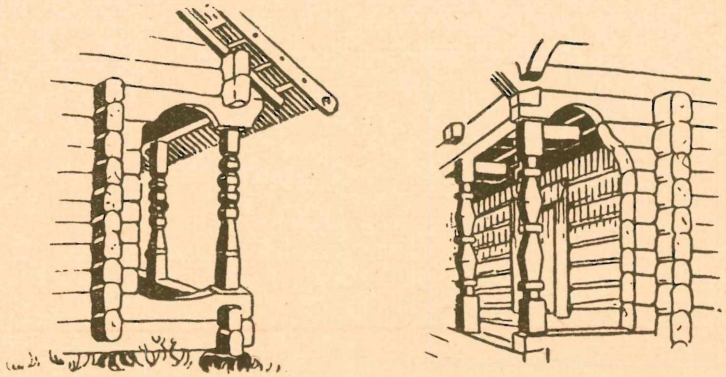
23. Dwellng-House, District of Stalupénai (Stallupönen, Prussian Lithuania)



24. Fisherman's Dwelling at Nida (Nidden)



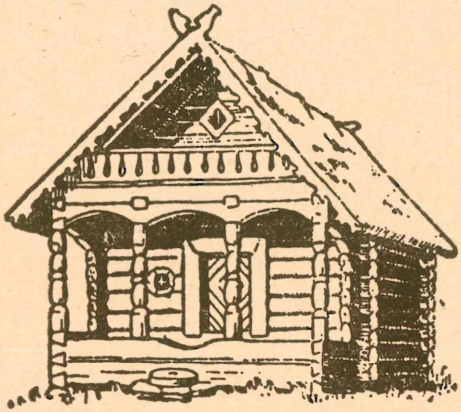
25. Dwelling-House, District of Pagėgiai (Pogegen)



26.—27. "Prieklétis" of the Storehouse

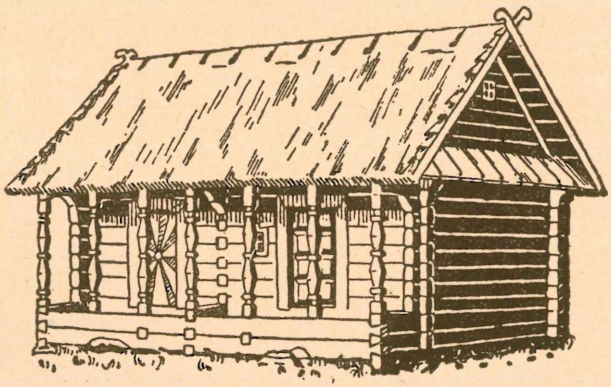
ported by two or four posts which form a kind a pillar-borne frontal, *"prieklétis."* The vertical section and plan resemble those of a small Greco-Roman prostyle. The *klétis* corresponds to the naos, the *prieklétis* to the pronaos. This is a wooden temple, Mr. Galauné compared them with one. The proportions, the distribution of parts and the whole arrangement of the front are nearly identical. Horizontal branches supported by the pillars form the architrave, above which appears the frontal. The transversal beams, with their ends inserted in the entablature of the roof, bear some resemblance to triglyphs and metopes.

There can be no doubt that this architectural type, which originated in centres of human culture that had no contact whatever with Greece, is completely independent from classical buildings, but the absence of direct ties renders such coincidences all the more remarkable. Indeed they are of great interest for the investigation of the genesis of the ancient type of architecture. The principal factors which produced the Doric style are well known. Several trends are knotted together therein and form a homogenous order, but it is a Northern strain that seems to define its particular character. The triglyphes, the metopes, the steep roof as well as certain parts of the plan are due not to the technique of stone building, but to the timber-framing system hailing from the North. Unfortunately we can form nothing but hypotheses with regard to the pre-Hellenic huts of Thessalia and other regions which may have co-operated in their

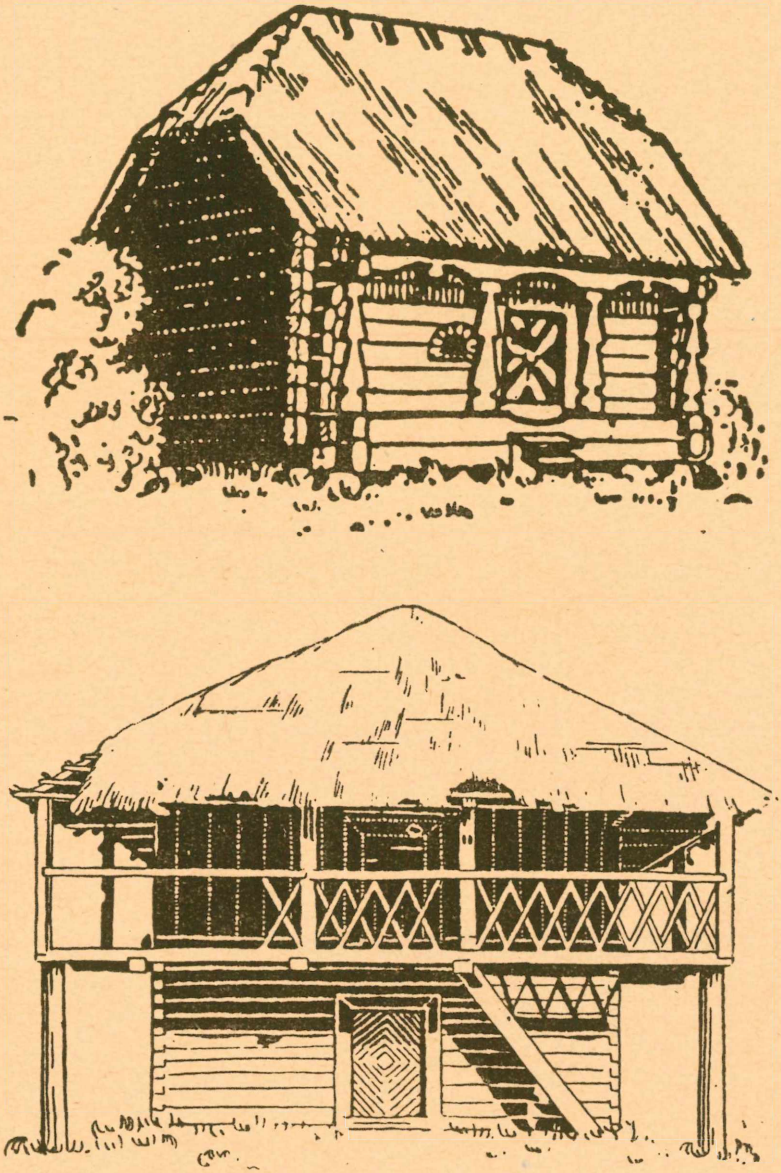


28. "Klétis", Storehouse
District of Kedainiai

development. Only by way of comparison with later and frequently distant monuments, which nevertheless follow the same rudimentary procedure, is it possible to catch a glimpse of these initial elements. It was thought that the *klétis* might give the best idea of them. Similarity of material, of the very limited means and of constructive nercessities should give rise to similar forms. But the *klétis* is only a prototype which is apt to become more complicated. Sometimes the *prieklétis* is shifted to one of the lateral walls, in such a case the space is developed, not in depth but in breath, as in certain oriental architectures. The most ancient known Syrian dwelling is built on the same plan. No doubt in this case, as in that of the temple, it is an accidental analogy, but this analogy deserves to be pointed out. Even when built in our time the *klétis* is sometimes filled with the smoky dust of yore.



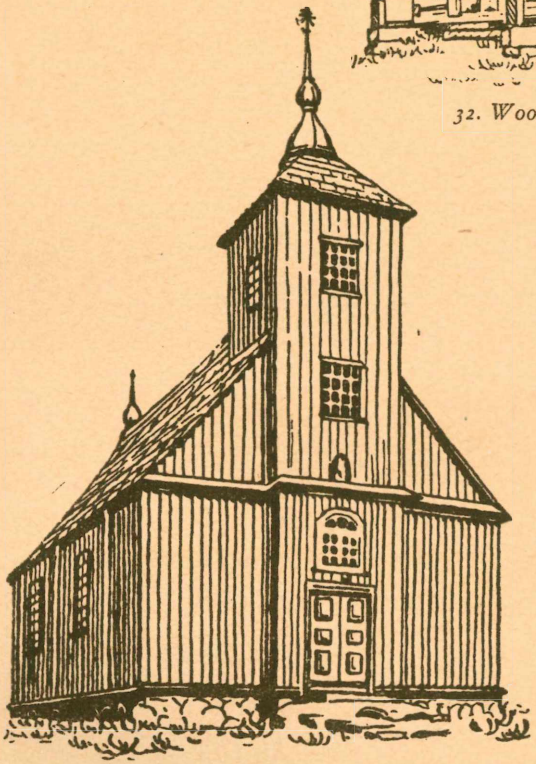
29. "Klétis", Storehouse
District of Biržai



30.—31. "Klétis", Storehouse, District of Biržai (above) and Vilnius

The architecture of the churches is linked to the same traditions.Since time immemorial wood was used to build them. The Cathedral of Vilnius was constructed in 1387 and was consecrated in that year. It was burnt down by the Teuton Knights.

32. Wooden Church at Rumšiškés



33. Wooden Church at Verpena

In 1390 Jagellon complained to the Pope of the destruction of the new wooden church by the Teuton Knights, who used the material to build a bridge across the Neris river. The cathedral was rebuilt, but it was again burnt down entirely in 1394. These sanctuaries of Christian Lithuania were often erected on the very spots formely occupied by ancient temples. According to the chronicles the first cathedral just

34. Wooden Church at Gruzdžiai

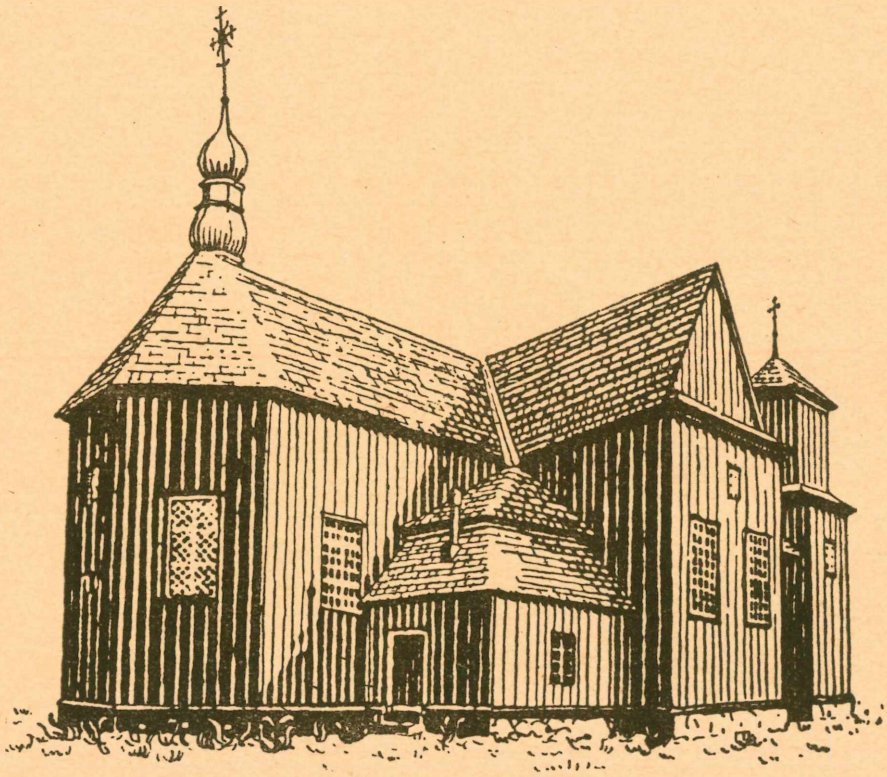
mentioned above, had been erected on the very spot of the altar on which the eternal fire used to burn.

> *"Principalem autem aram in loco ubi ignis qui falso perpetuus creditus est, accendebatur, constituit, ut error gentilis fieret cunctis patentior."*

Their construction and design certainly could not have differed much from that of the civilian buildings. As in the times of the first Christians, it was the private dwelling that at first received the new God. Up to the present the *klétis* often serves as a church. When dedicated to the cult, the dwelling of the peasant was enlarged, its plan was extended, the roof was built higher, the windows became wider, but the general lines remained

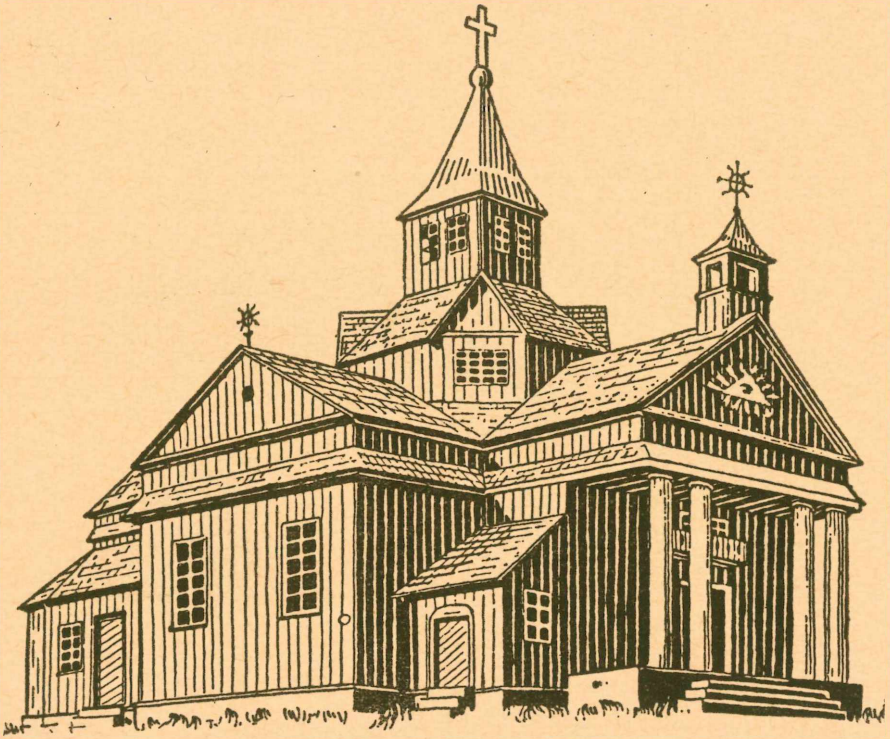
35. Wooden Church at Salantai, 17th cent.

unchanged. The altar was separated from the nave by a simple railing and the *prieklétis* then played the part of a direct porch. Where an apse was provided for it was either formed by a prolongation of the lateral walls, or it was narrower, of the usual dimensions only. In the interior the walls were painted in uniform color, the ceiling was often blue and strewn with gilded stars. The windows were sometimes decorated with multicolored panes of glass, a last reflection of the monumental Gothic church windows. On certain holidays the beams, the ceiling, the altar and the statues were overladen with garlands of flowers and foliage. Peasants' fairy plays were later acted in this adornment of plants and stars. The church in its Sunday splendor sparkles under its clothing of wood.



36. Wooden Church at Kedainiai, 18th cent.

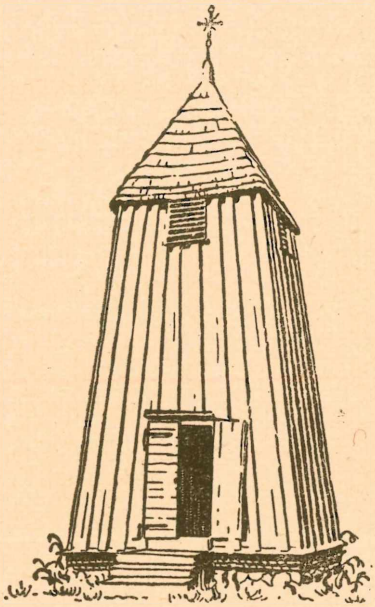
The bell was sheltered in a small tower, situated at first on the churches. It was suspended under the porch or even in the vestry. But in most cases a separate building was erected for it. The steeple proper never constituted a part of the church, it developed independently. At Vabalninkas at Varéna long beams supporting a double sloped roof replaced the steeple. In general however the construction was more complicated. The plan was sometimes a square and sometimes octagonal. There are innumerable variations, from a simple pyramid protected by a roof to the boldest scaffoldings, the stories of which seem to evolve from each other as from a magic box. At Vajasiškis the three stories, receding one above the other, constitute a kind of ziggurat. The tower frequently rose upon a pyramidal base which in certain cases formed the main part of the



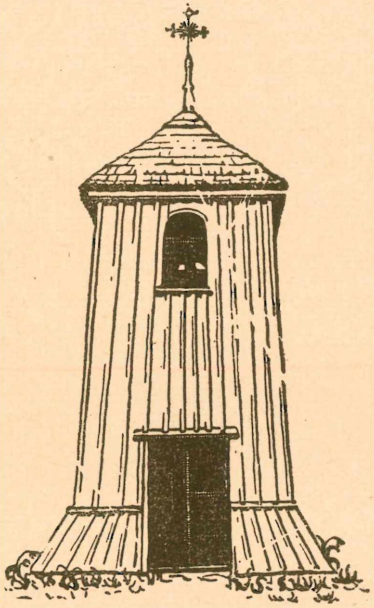
37. Wooden Church at Ukmergé

buildings. Its walls were perpendicular or inclined. The number of stories later increased. The divisions between them were marked off by cornices. The apertures were large and sometimes transformed into arcades.

Resting on their large bases with their solid and uniform fronts, these towers often give an impression of imposing weight, which one is astonished to find in a building erected of such light materials. They have the shape and the ruggedness of a military construction, it is a massive architecture without superfluous decorations. The types with slanting walls remind one of big windmills without wings. They have been compared with Ukrainian and Polish monuments, in particular with those of Galicia, where such church towers may have been developed from observation towers and defence keeps of ancient strongholds. Such rustic churches and steeples however could satisfy only small villages. Whenever a vaster



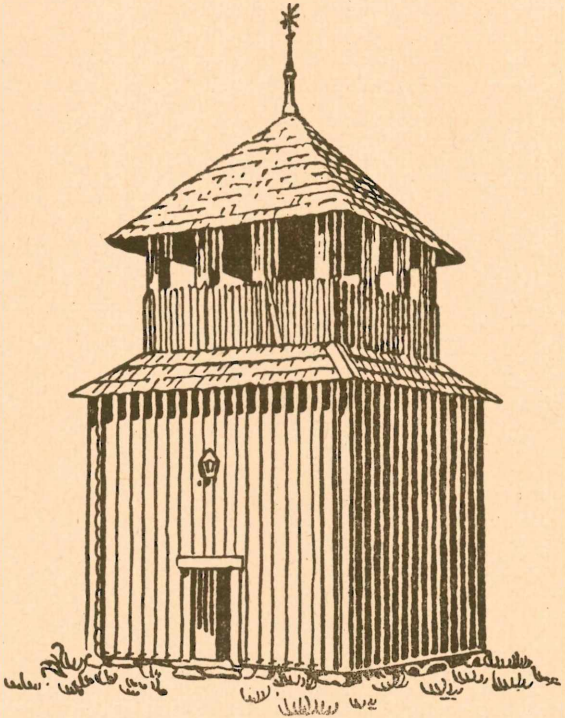
38. Bell-Tower at Varputėnai



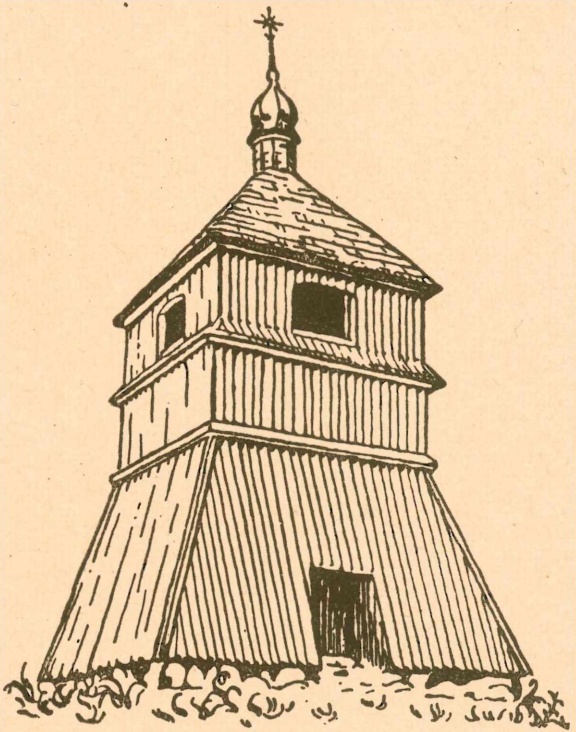
39. Bell-Tower at Degučiai

building was necessary the plans and vertical sections of Western monuments were adopted, such as those of the churches consisting of several naves or provided with a dome. But the cathedral conceived for an architecture in stone completely changed its aspect when built of wood. Often imported systems mingle with the local forms and the elements of a large church are then grafted upon the *klėtis*.

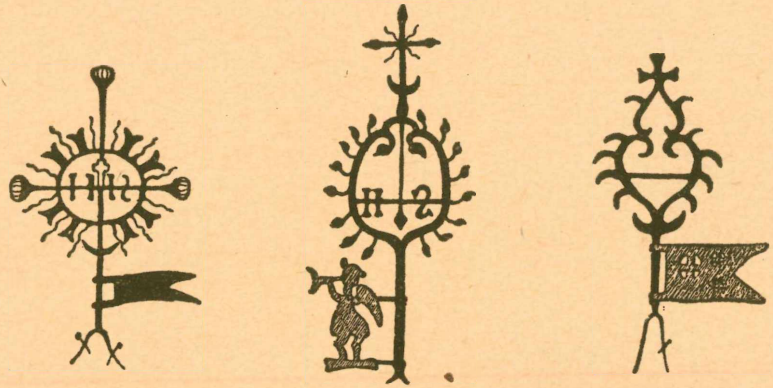
Small chapels were divided into three naves separated from each other by columns. Galleries were built on the sides of the aisles and towards the entrance. The number of vestries was increased, transepts appeared, a tower or two steeples were added to the front, the windows, though enlarged remained faithful to their primitive rectangular plan and only in some cases they were surmounted by a mitre-shaped arch. Being built of wood the edifice lost its habitual ornamentation. Buttresses and arcades were suppressed. Curves were completely banished and there was nothing left to attenuate an impression of nudity. All harmony was reduced to the proportions and equilibrium of the masses.



40. Bell-Tower at Pasvalis, 18th cent.

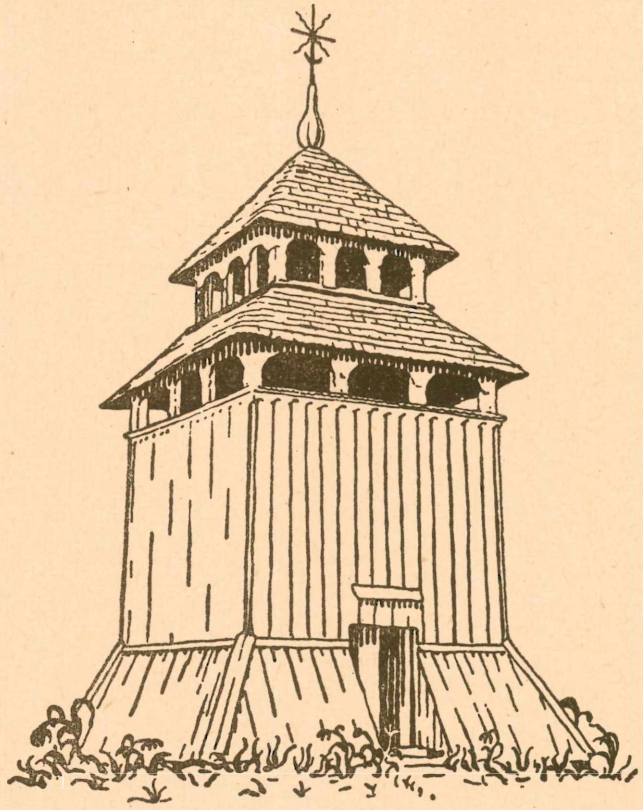


41. Bell-Tower at Rozalimas, 18thcent.

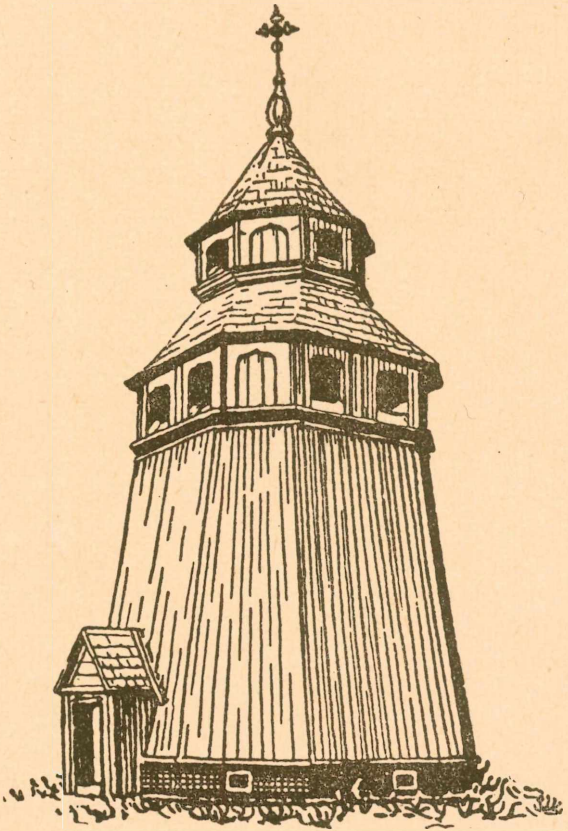


42.—44. Iron Heads of Crosses on Churches and Bell-Towers

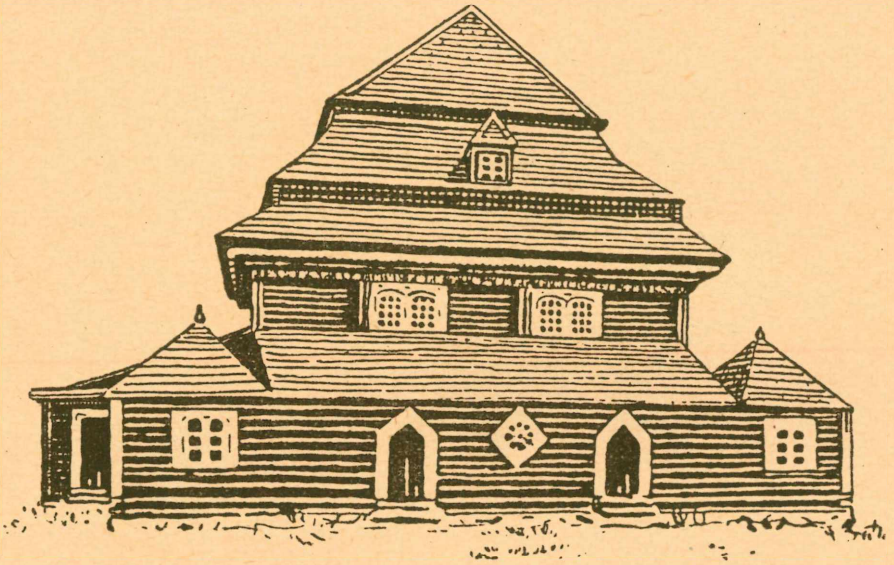
They are formidable barns, the austerity of which reminds one of Cistercian architecture. The same may be said of the churches which reproduced classic models with marble panelings, colonnades and cornices. At Utena the entablature is replaced by a supplementary roofing running along the walls, as is to be seen on certain church towers. The dome is composed of an octagon with a roof supporting a small square turret, the lantern. The reduction of curves to straight lines gives the structure an air of particular solidity. No luxury, no clever distribution in which everything is calculated, in which every profile has been meditated, but only a frank and sober framework of timber. In the churches of the 17th and 18th centuries there are baroque bulbs on the roofs or on the towers, but such light designs only serve to accentuate the massiveness of the construction. The wood is not hidden behind a coating of stucco. Friezes and mouldings are replaced by simple boarding. The seafaring peoples of the North built their church to resemble the hull of a boat. In Lithuania they are the work of the wood chopper. Even if inspired by the mason the builder of huts will not renounce his craft. He will discover therein new possibilities and succeed in erecting buildings on a hitherto unusual scale. By suppressing such elements of construction and ornamentation which belong to monuments built of stone only, he will succeed in avoiding what is not genuine and only calculated to deceive the eye and in creating an art belonging to him alone.



45. Bell-Tower at Tryškiai, 18th cent.



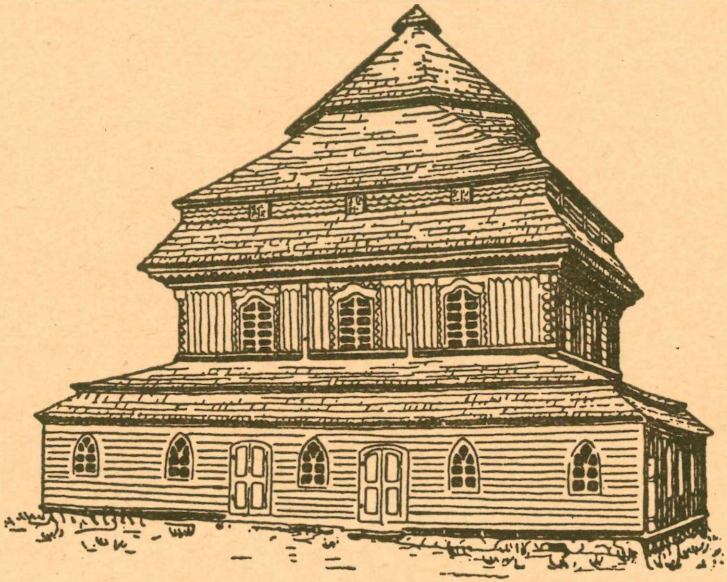
46. Bell-Tower at Šaukėnai, 18th cent.



47. Synagogue at Valkininkai

The same dexterity in the handling of material may be seen in the synagogues. As early as 1388 Vytautas the Great granted to the Jews privileges that assured them liberty of worship. Article 14 of this decree protects their temples: "Whosoever throws something into a Jewish school — i.e. a synagogue — shall be fined two talents or two pounds of pepper." Such religious tolerance has become a matter of tradition.

The most ancient buildings which have been preserved go back to the 17th century. The rectangular buildings are surrounded by galleries and by numerous outbuildings. Towers are sometimes placed at the corners, but the whole complex is dominated by an enormous roof. This is above all an architecture of masses. The pyramidal masses crush the walls. They are multiplied and accumulated. At Vyžuoniai there are two and at Jurbarkas three. These phantastic superstructures are not infrequently many times higher than the wall of the front side. Between two roofings a second story is often built in. In most important synagogues a dome rises above this structure, which is covered also by a roof. At Šaukénai the synagogue is built on an octagonal plan, at Valkininkai on

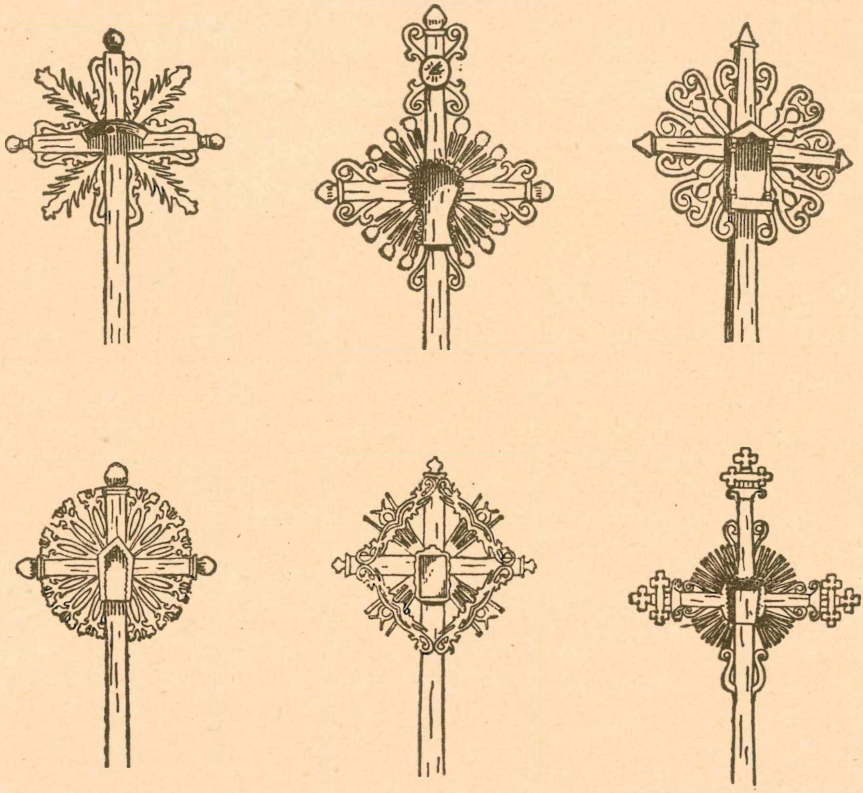


48. Synagogue at Saukénai

a square plan externally, but octagonal in the interior. The principle of a double plan, which is used in the East in the so-called encasing system, can be recognized here. With the exception of the dome however, architecture due to local builders seems to be linked with local tradition. This perhaps gives the most correct idea of what the vast mansions of the nobility were in the 17th and 18th centuries. According to documents they were very large buildings, often provided with cubic pavillons at the corners and with gigantic attics. By their dimensions and their construction they belong to the same series as the large churches and church towers. If the family of buildings of the *klétis* order is characterized by a rational economy of construction, we have here a superabundance of plastics and of bold effects in the proportions.

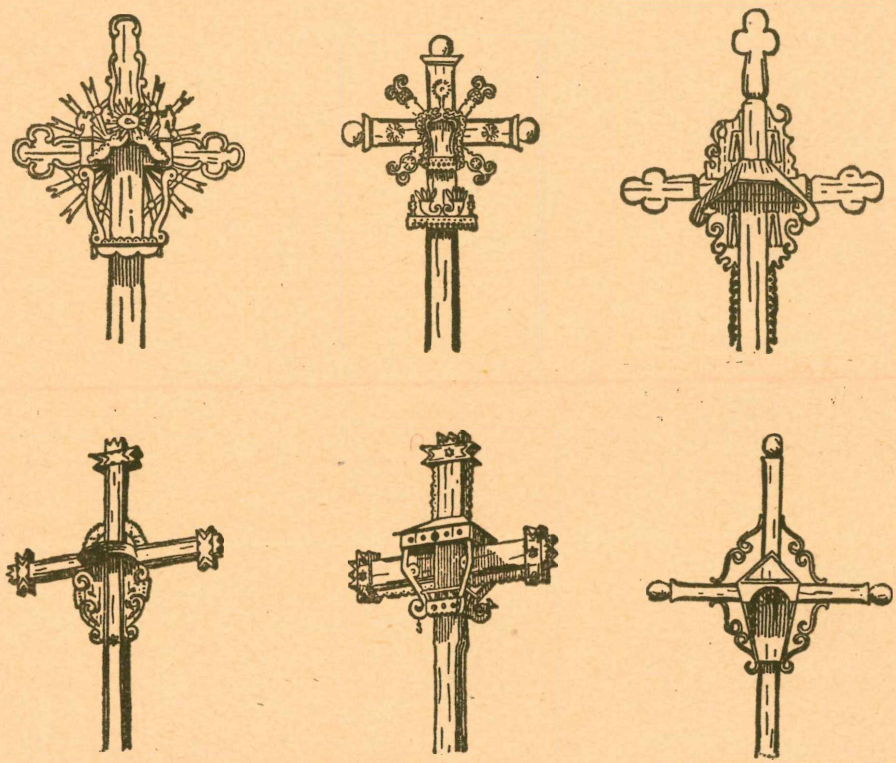
CROSSES AND CHAPELS

But Lithuania is not only a country of wooden churches: she is particularly the land of crosses. Inseparable from the landscape their outlines follow the undulations of the fields and penetrate into the woods. They are placed along the roads, in the proximity of sources, on tombs, on *piliakalniai,* both in solitary and frequented places. According to legend you find one at every ten paces in Holy Žemaitija. At the cemetery of Vilnius they leave no room for a tree. Though they are originally funereal they are mostly votive offerings. They commemorate a birth, a baptism, the favorable issue of a lawsuit. They are planted in times of epidemics or of drought. They remind the peasant of the successes and misfortunes



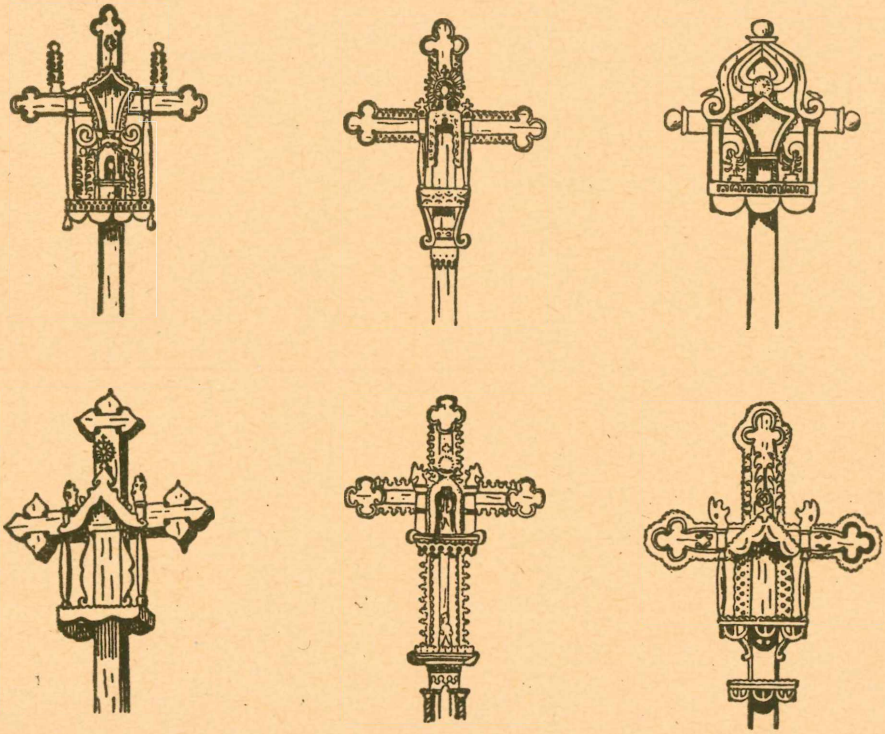
49.—54. Crosses

of his lifetime. Their consecration was celebrated by ancient rites and banquets, at which mead and beer flowed in streams. They often had nothing in common with a cross but the name and the clergy forbade their use. As early as 1426 the church proscribed them. It refused to bless them and had them removed from the neighbourhood of the chapels. Mr. Basanavičius has proved that the origin of these monuments lies far back in primitive beliefs. Trunks of trees, often rudimentary stems, were erected in prehistoric cemeteries. The archives of the churches at Insterburg testify to the custom followed by the Lithuanians up to the 17th century of placing on their tombs figures carved from boards, horses for men and birds for women. Up to the present day in the graveyards of



55.—60. Crosses

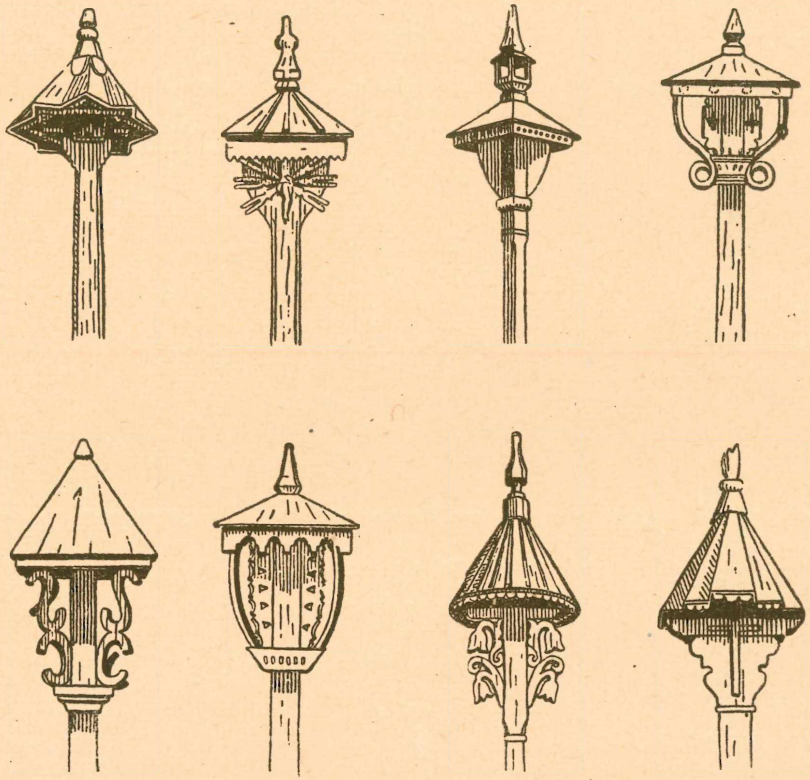
fishermen in the region of Klaipéda (Memel), one may come across toads and fantastically shaped animals carved in oak or in pinewood. They are placed not near the head, but at the feet of the dead. In these monsters cowering on the grave, there is no trace of Christian symbolism. Though their variety seems to be inexhaustible, — Mr. Varnas photographed more than 2000 crosses all differing one from the other — these crosses and steles may be divided into several groups. According to Mr. Galauné, the most ancient type is a simple tree trunk rudely squared. Similar funereal posts have also been found in Russia, in Finland and in Hungary. At their tops there is sometimes a small roof and sometimes a small niche. From these two archaic types stem two series of crosses: the "mushroom cross", crowned by a gable and the "lantern cross", consi-



61.—66. Crosses

sting of a chapel supported by a pedestal. A third series comprises the crosses properly so called.

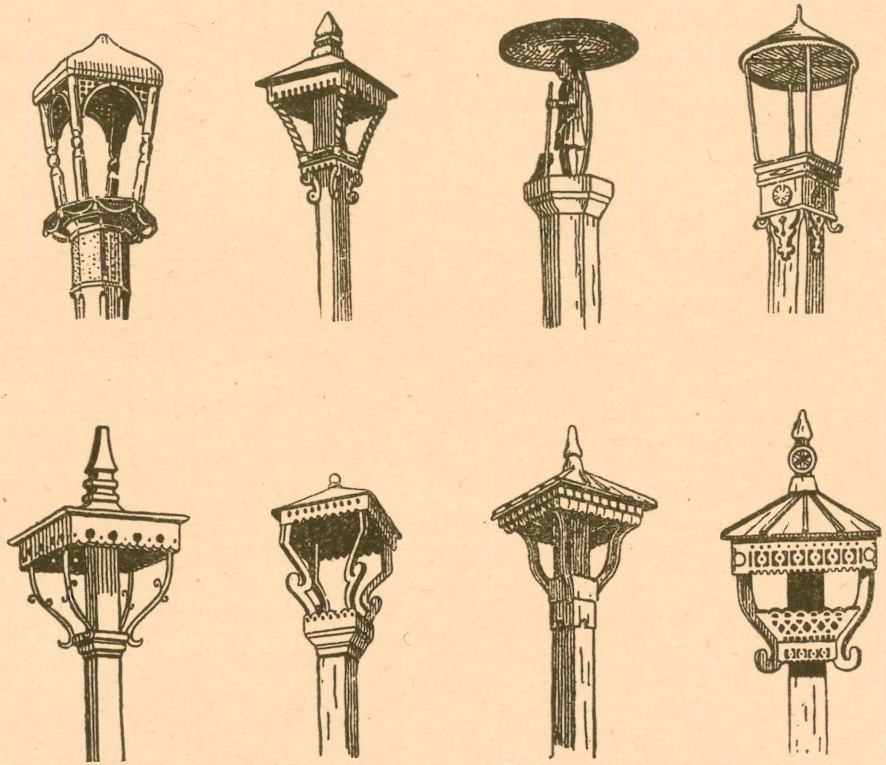
In these types of craftsmanship on a reduced scale, rather than in churches and dwelling-houses, the woodcutter gives his imagination free play to produce complicated forms. The roof of the "mushroom cross" is constantly renewed and reshaped as a cone or a pyramid, a star or a Greek cross. Cornices are suspended below it. It is supported by consoles or by twisted columns. They become reliquaries set on high posts. Sometimes a number of such erections are placed one above the other in the shape of strange pagodas. The "lantern type" goes through a similar evolution, small houses replace the ordinary roof, small *klétis,* the front of which is decorated with two columns, buildings in the shape of a cross or a polygone with spires or small central domes or rotundas. The walls are fre-



67.—74. Crosses

quently replaced by pillars. The chapel is often protected by trellis work, by jutty rooms, by openwork balustrades, so that the chapel itself seems to be nearly submerged under the weight of this light burden. It is an architecture of fairy tales and toys.

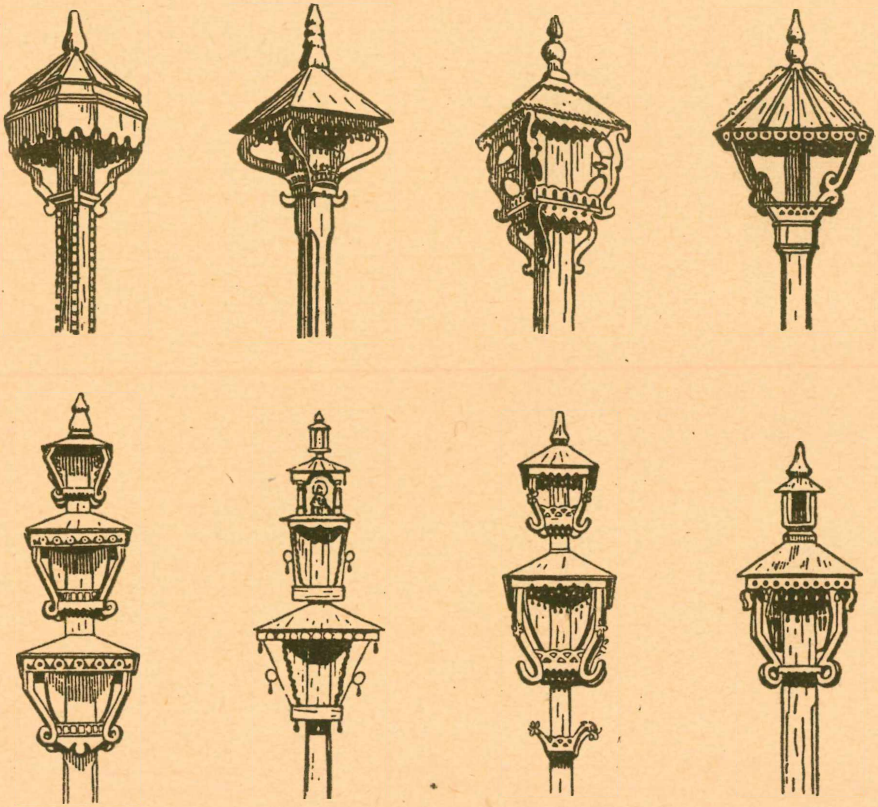
But it is the third group, that of crosses proper, that is the fittest object of such goldsmith's work in boards. It may be combined with the "lanterns", and then the chapel is placed at the crossing of the arms. In some cases the chapel disappears completely, leaving nothing behind but its back wall, which then becomes an independent element of ornamentation, a shield with capricious outlines fixed at the intersection of the arms of the cross. One could have thought that henceforth all traces of the ancient themes



75.—82. Crosses and Chapels

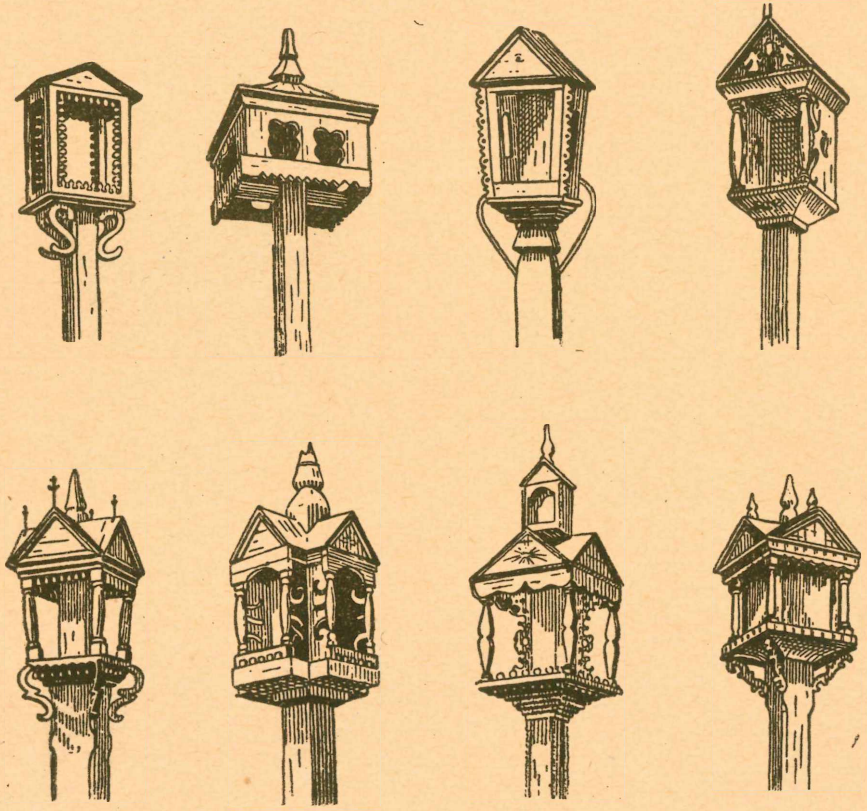
had disappeared, but such is not the case. Around the cross, with or without a chapel, there are often placed wheels and disks of fire. As in Ireland there are frequently to be seen circles or fan shaped arrays of arrows, leafwork, palm leaves, wreaths of flowers. Sometimes their dimensions do not exceed those of a simple aureole, but in certain cases the cross is submerged thereunder.

To the now barely discernible Christian symbol another element is joined, the origin of which goes back to pagan traditions. It is a surviving remnant of prehistoric forms and of the ancient worship of the celestial bodies. Sun wheels are revived and eclipse the symbol of Christ. The myth is also preserved in the legends transmitted by word of mouth.



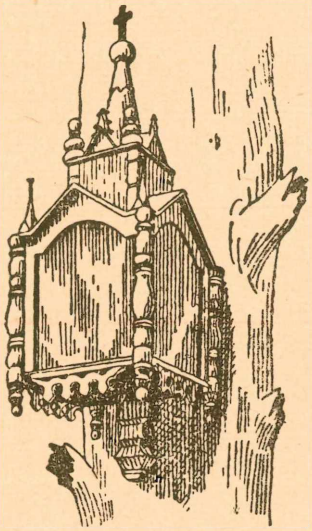
83.—90. Crosses

There can be no doubt that the most ancient forms are those in which the wheel prevails. Sunk in the flames of the former god, the emblem of the new religion is lost at first in the conflagration and only emerges from it gradually. Gradually also the light of the celestial body diminishes and transforms itself into an aureole. For a long time both symbols are at par, but later the cross emerges. It has often several arms, each of which itself bears several arms. Finally the last of these accessories disappears and the cross alone remains in its traditional simplicity. The large grave crosses that stand inclined all over the open country belong to the most recent type.

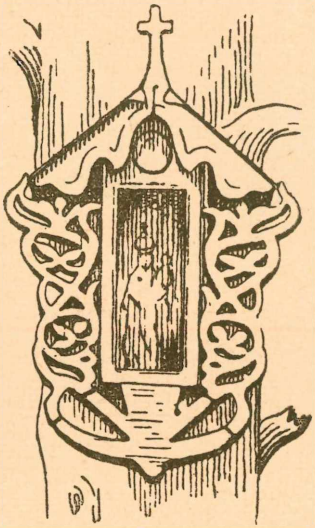


91.—98. Crosses and Chapels

Small votive chapels are scattered in the woods and in the meadows. They only came into fashion at some later time and they are especially frequent in Žemaitija. They shelter small statuettes and offerings are usually deposited there, such als strings of beads of amber or glass, ribbons, colored tissues, artificial flowers and frequently also pocket mirrors, to which some particular meaning seems to be attached. Small statuettes of the Holy Virgin are surrounded by bits of looking glass, that reflect and multiply her image. Sometimes such chapels are suspended aloft on trees, sometimes they stand on the ground or on a base of stone. These are the cages or the cabins of the Saints. The "cages" often attached to oaks,



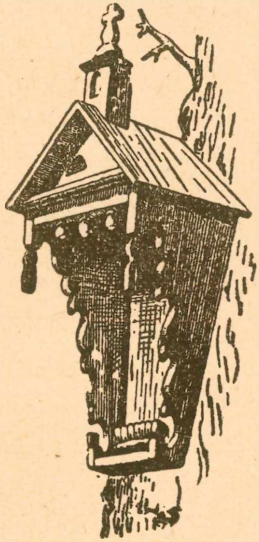
99. Votive Chapel near Kremala



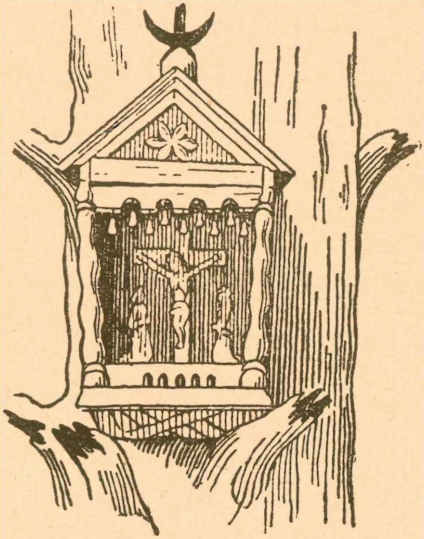
100. Votive Chapel near Skiemoniai

firs and pines, do not differ essentially from the small "houses" set upon pillars and crosses, but the "cabins" constitute a distinct series. They are much larger, their height sometimes attaining two meters, they are no longer toy houses and not yet real houses. Sometimes they consist of an old excavated tree trunk, surmounted by a conical roof, the statuette itself is placed in the very heart of the tree. They sometimes reproduce the *klétis* type of church or its pyramid-shaped steeple, and often they are built on a circular, hexagonal or octagonal plan. They are easier to make on account of their reduced scale, which presents the double effect of a church and piece of furniture. These monuments abound in inventions, but they are not the work of ornamentalists like the lanterns. The decorative elements of Western buildings are adapted to them and the Gothic as well as the classic forms are reproduced there according to the taste of the joiner.

The small chapels are loaded with spires and ornamental flowers. Broken arches run along the walls and join the colonnades. The various themes are thrown into one and recast. Out of this mixture arose a fantastic

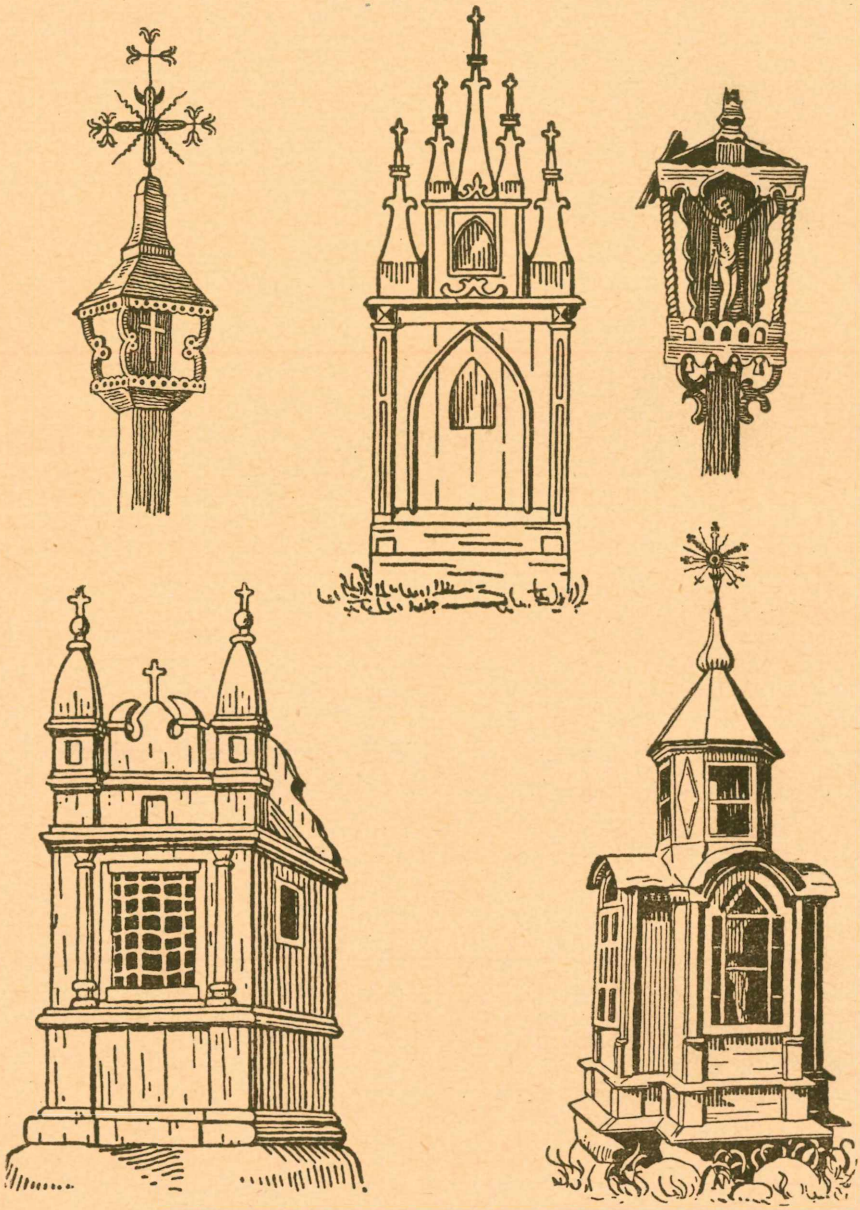


101. Votive Chapel near Jučiúnai

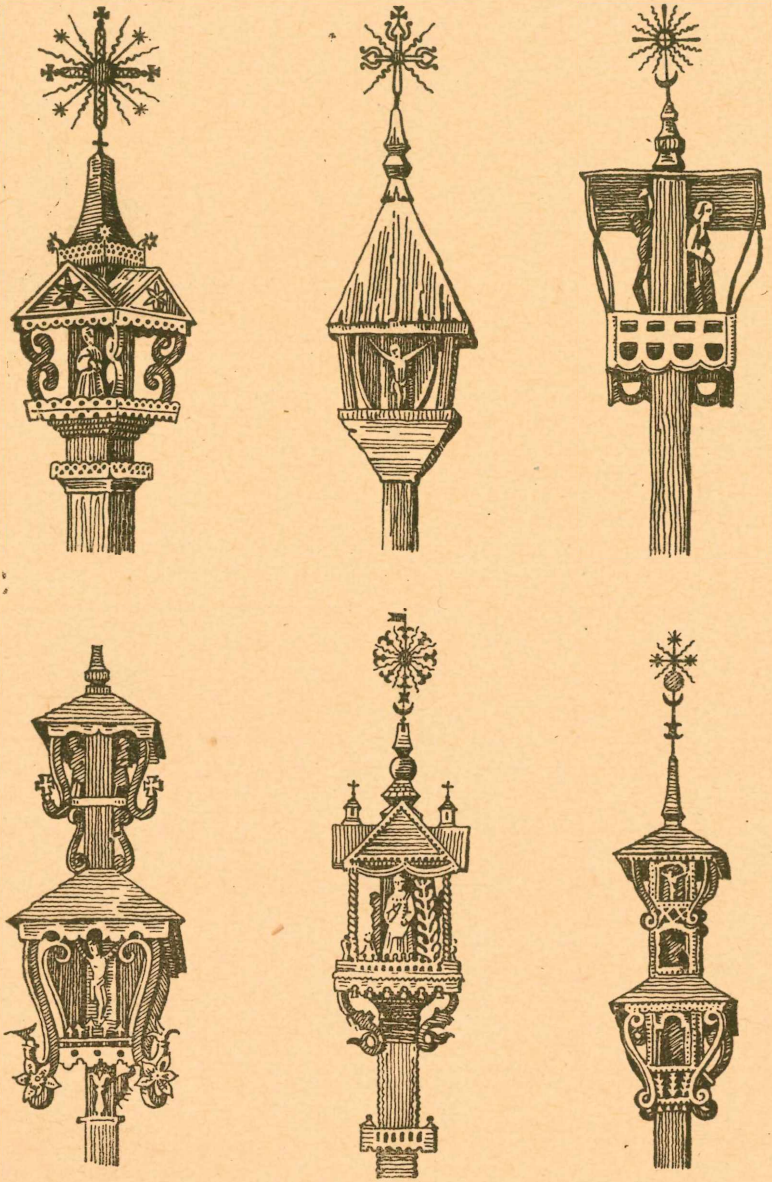


102. Votive Chapel, Forest of Šilėnai

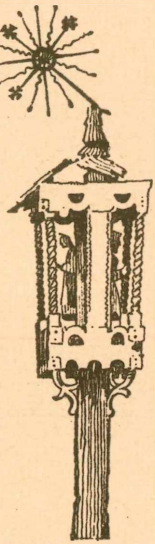
miniature architecture, a Pompeian style of the Middle Ages, similar to that of the tabernacles and stained glass windows of churches. Baroque designs treated with liberty and measure are also frequent. Nothing is forgotten here, pinions, broken gables, delicately outlined roofs and so on. Cornices, entablatures, pillars, capitals and mouldings are carved with the greatest skill and an eye for detail. Imaginary and real at the same time, these small tempietti lost amid the vegetation, seem to have been devised to receive the smaller deities of Nature. Similarly to the steles, crosses and churches, these chapels are frequently surmounted with ornaments in wrought iron. These appear later than the wooden solar roses, but continue their tradition. Until the end of the 18th century they usually represent the signs of celestial bodies, the sun, the crescent moon or celestial wheels. Later the cross appears, but it is often broken up by the geometrical ornamentations. Sometimes each arm bears supplementary arms, sometimes the horizontal arms are double or even treble. Angels, animals, persons and certain Oriental images are also represented. But the design is always dominated by the theme of radiation.

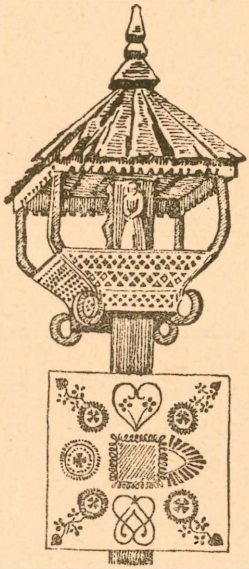


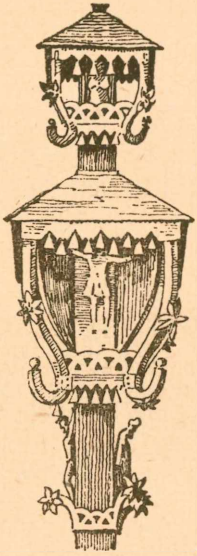
103.—107. Votive Chapels and Crosses



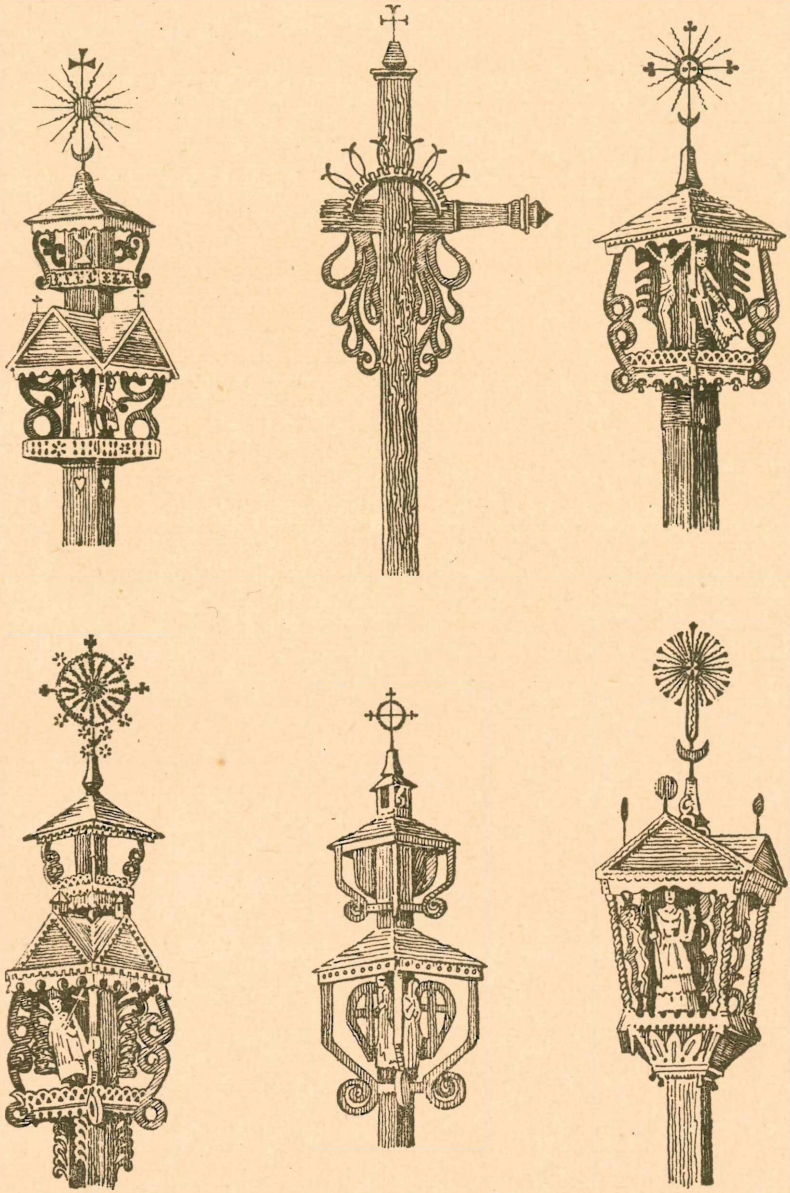
108.—113. Crosses and Chapels



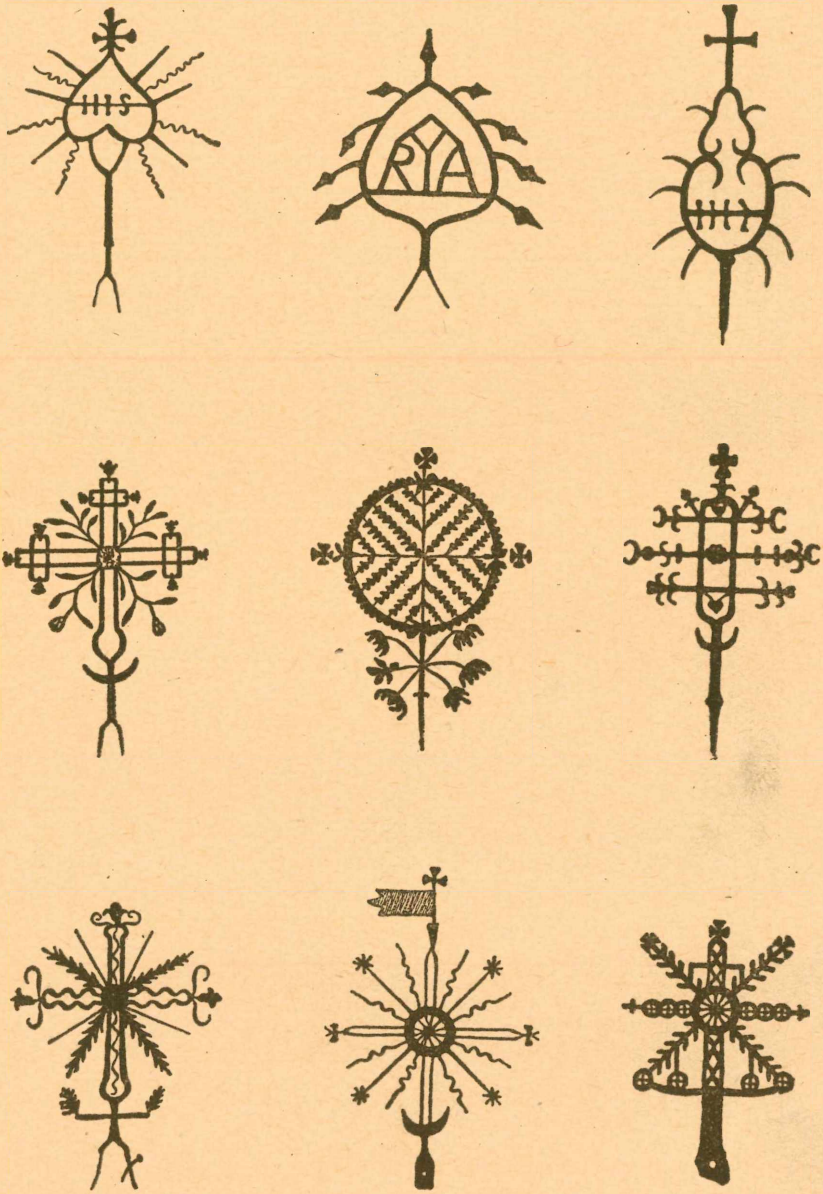




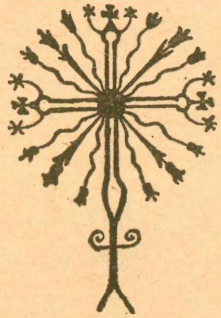
114.—119. Crosses and Chapels

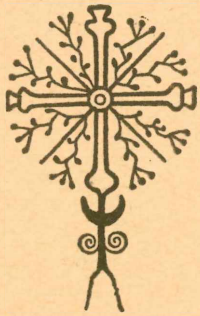
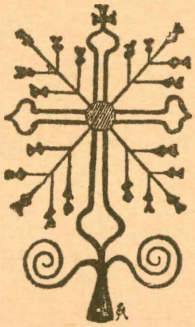
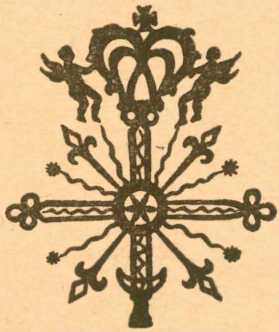
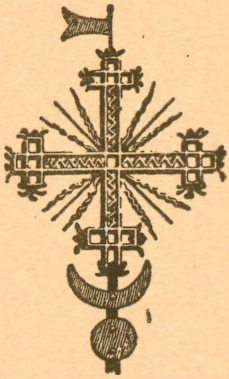
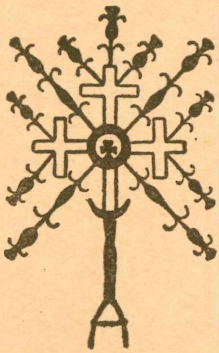
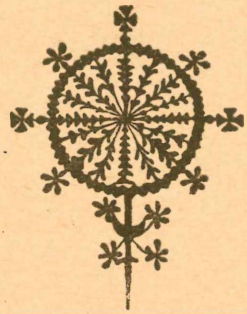
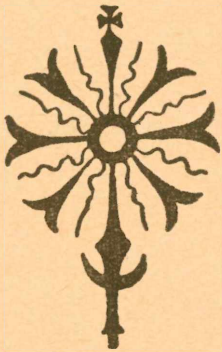


120.—125. Crosses and Chapels

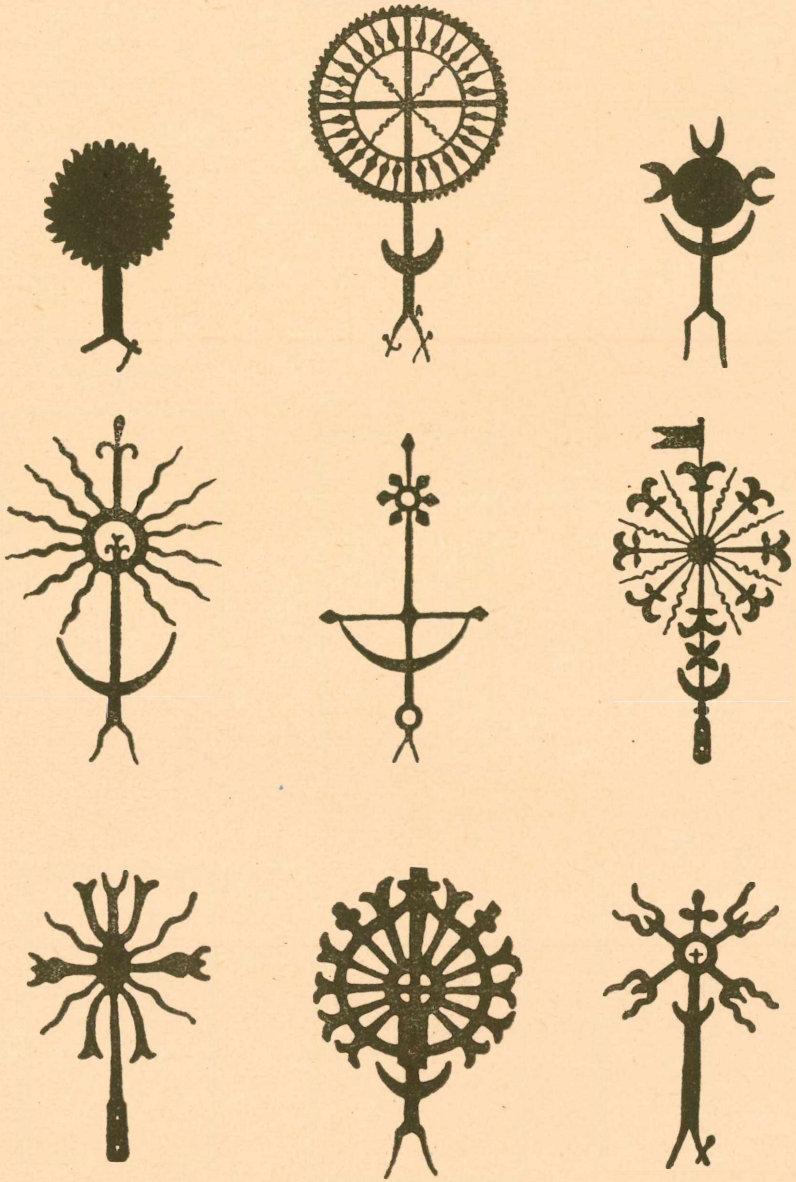


126.—134. Iron Heads of Crosses



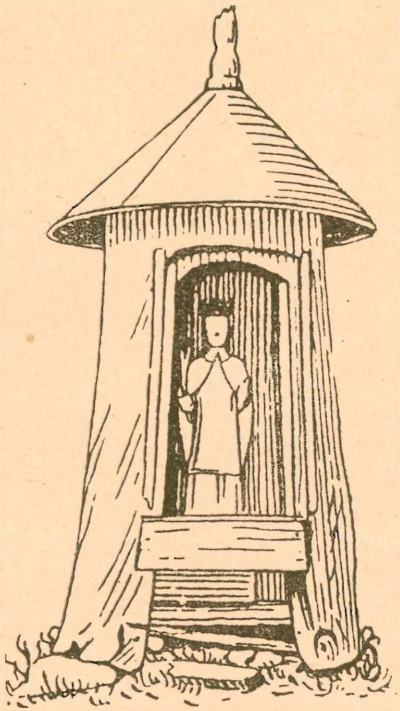








135.—143. Iron Heads of Crosses



144.—152. Iron Heads of Crosses

Arrows stream forth in all directions, regularly undulated sword blades, idealized vegetation, tulips which are already to be found on prehistoric jewelry, the uruta, the national flower and branches of fir. When executed in metal they retain all the hardness and refinement of the material of which they are made. In these complicated networks all the parts are cleverly united and cut with cold precision. The monuments are crowned by iron crystals resembling blackened crystals of snow.



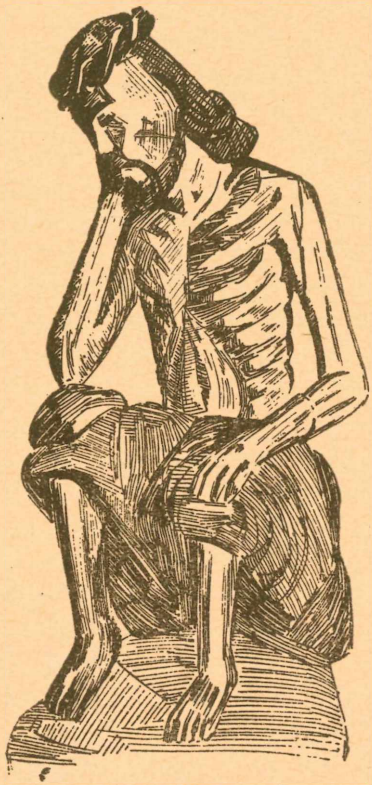
SCULPTURE

The chapels and crosses shelter small deities, the *"dievukai"* and *"rupintojėliai"*. The Holy Virgins and the Christs, as well as the good popular Saints, take up their quarters under trees, appear in the "cages", hung in trees, conceal themselves in the "cabins". It is perhaps in this imagery in wood that the Lithuanian peasant has done his utmost. A religious art, though not an art of the church, this sculpture spread in spite of the periodical campaigns of the clergy. One inconoclastical crusade follows another, but the work of the "God makers", the *"dievdirbis"*, does not cease. As late as in 1752 the bishop Tiškevičius of Žemaitija preached against this statuary. No doubt he invoked the same reasons as St. Bernhard in his fight against the monsters of the Romanesque churches, excessive freedom of expression and rudeness of features. Such figures were denied benediction and their admission to sanctuaries was forbidden with only two exceptions, a crucifixion and a Christ. All the others populate the fields, the woods and the roads.

Such conflicts have had a profound repercussion on the formation of this art. Driven out of the church popular sculpture cast off the fetters of convention and developed itself freely. The subjects most frequently treated were borrowed from the Gospels and the Apocrypha, as well as from the legend of the Saints. The chief subject taken over from the Gospel was the cycle of the Passion: Pietà, the Virgin of the Seven Sorrows, Christ

in a sitting posture or bearing the cross, the Crucifixion. The Pietà remained faithful to its canonical image, as in Western sculpture the Holy Virgin was represented with the body of her Son on her knees. The figure of the Saviour is sometimes quite small in comparison with that of his mother, — he always has remained a child. The Virgin of the Seven Sorrows shows an immense heart pierced by seven flaming swords The sitting Christ is represented as awaiting execution.

The Apocrypha furnished scenes from the education of the Virgin and St. Joseph rocking the Holy Infant. Among the Saints St. George killing the Dragon takes first place, being the patron Saint of the Lithuanian peasant. Then follows St. Isidore, patron Saint of the agricultural labourer with the angel a the plough. The iconography is in general correct. St. Catherine holds the wheel, St. Agatha the bread, St. John Nepomuk a crucifix and a branch. St. Rochus the pilgrim, followed by his dog, covers his crushed leg, St. Francis receives the stygmata. Nevertheless, certain details sound a particular note, the image of Pietà is often blended with that of the Virgin of the Seven Sorrows and an aureole of stars surrounds the Mother of God, while two angels bearing chandeliers stand on each side. Sometimes she is represented with the crown of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania on her head. The sitting Christ, generally represented alone in Western sculpture, is here attended by two hieratic worshipping figures. According to Žemaitic legend this is not a scene of the Passion, but represents Christ returned to earth after his resurrection. He is resting by the wayside and weeping over the misery of mankind. The Christ of



153. „Rúpintojélis", wood-cut, 18th cent.

Nazareth has a thick growth of hair, — a reminiscence of a much venerated statue brought from Italy to Vilnius in 1700, — on which the hair was believed to have grown by a miracle. St. Rochus and St. Isidore, having arrived from abroad, wear bowler hats. St. Francis sometimes has a large spoon stuck in his belt. The bread of St. Agatha protects against fire. In case of fire, consecrated bread is carried around the house. St. George is often represented wearing a helmet. It would be easy to multiply these examples.

It was not however these picturesque details which filled the representatives of the church with indignation, but much rather the form, the movement and the treatment of the subject.

Certain figures remind us of the images of Greece of Homer. A rudely shaped trunk has a simple sphere for a head. On other faces a smile of Kozee is frozen. The canon is often irregular, heads either too big or too small, hands sometimes enormous and sometimes atrophied, postures convulsed. It is here in these deformed bodies that the artist gives the measure of his power of expression. Certain heads, e. g. that of the sitting Christ submerged in the mass of his hair, his cheeks stained by gigantic drops of blood, or that of the crucified Christ displaying His large hands, His mouth like an open wound, His eyes scarcely visible, produce a dramatically violent impression. The features of such heads differ widely. Sometimes the heads are supported by long, thin necks, sometimes they are fixed immediately on the trunk with eyes wide open or closed and the mouths distorted in grimace, they are supernatural and yet true. Other figures stiffen in inaccessible gravity like that flat and pale Virgin holding her dead son with the gestures of an automaton.

These figures however belong to two races: at the side of a tormented and monstrous mankind, we see a pastoral and peaceful mankind. There the Saints are peasants, round-cheeked with salient cheekbones and big astonished eyes. This is a homely world. The Pietà is no longer an insensible idol, but a peasant woman who is bending over her son. She is surrounded not by angels, but by winged choirboys. Often she looks like a timid shepherdess hidden behind a fan formed of swords. Such statues are full of good nature and joviality and they are perhaps still more pathetic than the supernatural beings with their exaggerated features. The episodes there are not scenes of family life, an atmosphere of

mystery still persists. The little angel who, with courageous hands, seizes the handle of the plough, resembles a troll in a fairytale. The tale is often told with an epic simplicity and love of detail does not affect the great lines. Quizzical observations assume a new meaning. A miracle performed by a Saint dressed like a village curate, seems to be all the more marvellous. Provided with symbolic attributes such as bread, tools etc. these peasants with the resigned features of the wise and the humble ones, are given the wings of angels and enter into legend.

Such are the principal aspects of this sculpture. At the same time deities and toys, reality and fable, but seldom indifferent, these little statuettes carved in wood affect or terrify us. The reason of the hostility of the clergy in the era of Classicism and afterwards, when countryside churches favored mass production of statues, is easily comprehensible.

The composition and execution of these statues are very varied. We find there all the stages of an evolution which extends from archaism to sophisticated refinement. Forms preserved in the rites of craftsmanship, though wide apart in time, meet again on the same object and are applied in the same workshop. Rigorous geometry, monumental distribution of the masses and the colorful play of agitated surfaces contradict and complete each other.

These statues are hewn by hard and vigorous blows. Synthetic lines simplify the features and sometimes deform them. Details are accentuated by graphic incisions, the polychromy of pure and vivacious colors emphasizes the outlines and plans. A deep sense of architecture is everywhere manifested. Certain extended bodies stiffen into pillars. The legs of a sitting Pietà form a pedestal for the body of Christ. These statues are great in spite of their reduced scale. The wood in them is no longer a senseless material, it helps to animate the features represented. Within the statues the tree trunk is still alive. The priest's vestments resemble a suit made of the bark of a tree. St. George's dragon seems to twist and turn like a tortuous root. These are indeed sylvan deities hewn from a log of wood. Rigidity sometimes disappears to give place to a more flexible treatment. The graphics of the outlines are softened. The masses flow freely in a ripple of lights and shades, a breeze passes over the folded clothing and the outlines sometimes assume an affected grace. In his eagerness to make use of anything he can, the sculptor seeks to exhaust

all possibilities and takes his inspiration from every quarter. In his art we find traces of the Western Middle Ages, of the Baroque and even of the rustic toys of the present time. Lost in a world far removed from the highways of history, the village sculptor is often in arrear and sometimes successive epochs and fashions reach him simultaneously. Styles which would exclude each other elsewhere meet here. These different contributions arriving simultaneously enrich his choice. But, though a recipient for different techniques and various styles, the sculptor still remains true to himself. He transposes and adapts without betraying his true personality.

The influence of toys is particulary noticeable in groups the units of which are placed side by side like tin soldiers without any common action to link them together. They are displaced or interchanged, although they are incapable of motion. Such groups of articulated dolls are nevertheless touching in their candour. This series comprises a number of animals, St. George's horse is often a fine pied wooden mount. The two oxen fixed to a board and placed before a plough look like gingerbread beasts. Led by an angel they become God's own beasts. The magic objects of the little ones serve for the worship of the adults.

Among the Western styles which have exercised the strongest and most lasting influence in this field, the baroque elements and classic art should be mentioned in the first place. Following the Counter Reformation the Jesuits triumphed over all the numerous currents of art in Lithuania. The great European currents penetrated everywhere. Five large religious colleges were established between 1565 and 1575, the largest at Vilnius in 1579. There the latest doctrines were taught and tastes refined. A new age of civilisation began, cathedrals and palaces were built and foreign masters called upon to co-operate. Collections were brought together by the nobility and in the churches. Certain miracle performing statues are still venerated. But the influence of this sculpture is limited chiefly to the propagation of a certain number of iconographic types and plastic themes. The carver in wood is not insensible to this statuary, but his work, although inspired by it, lacks its magnificence. The faces are heavier, the gestures are awkward, the proportions become impersonal. The agitated folds and mystic rays have perhaps been assimilated best. But even amid

all these luxuriant undulations certain traits seem to be reminiscent of the flamboyant style. There seems to be no doubt that medieval art has exercised the stronger influence. This becomes evident in the very choice of the themes, such as the Passion, the Pietà, the Holy Virgin of the Seven Sorrows, afflicted Christ and in the preference shown for scenes of the childhood of Christ or of the education of St. Mary, in the success of some Saints, such as St. Rochus, the protector against the plague. The cycle of 15th and 16th century subjects is reconstituted. In it we find also the figure of the Devil, with his bat wings, his horns and crooked claws, the demon of Žemaitija hails from the hell of the Middle Ages which classic art did not retain.

This is a strange survival of a vast ancient repertoire. Nothing interfered with its development. In the churches of the towns hardly any traces of it are at present to be found, but the chapels nailed to the trees or built at the roadside are full of such images. They preserve it as a kind of relic of the first Christians in this country. The witnesses of their baptism have never abandoned the Lithuanians.

We know that the religion of the West was introduced at the exact time when this sculpture flourished. The conversion of certain chieftains, such as Mindaugas in 1251 and Gediminas in 1320, did not affect the beliefs of the people. Only in the 15th century the penetration of Christendom became deeper and broader. At first it had to adapt itself to local traditions, to allow itself to be mixed with local legends, later transforming and renewing the ancient faith. No doubt the wooden Gothic Saints were heartily welcomed in this country of trees. The popular pathos which developed in the last years of the Middle Ages, with its sense for melodrama and its love of anecdotes which go right to the heart of the peasant, has certainly also largely contributed to further the new propagation of these ancient forms.

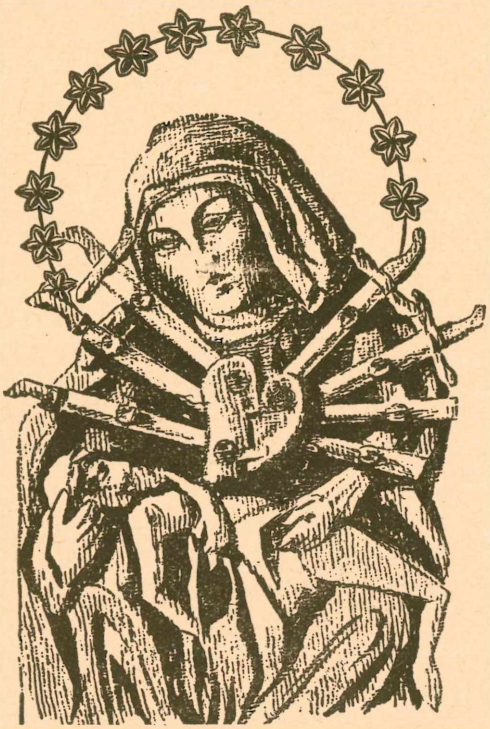
These have left a profound impression on the sculpture of this country. Even the statues copied from the classic baroque monuments often show a touch of it. Medieval man survived in our makers of images. But this is not only the man of the 15th century, a more archaic and unknown Middle Age also survives in him. The oversized deities and the statues bearing

clumsy heads are sometimes more akin to the characters of the 12th century, than to those of the great Gothic altar pieces. They show identical deformations and their movements are the same, angular and rigid. There too the supernatural world of fairytales reigns. Elongated shapes frozen in a trunk, remind one the statue pillar of Chartres. As they do in architectural ornamentation, vertical folds form real streaks. Certain crucifixes show the same violence as the Christ of Perpignan. If a Romanesque sculptor had had to represent a group of the Pietà, he would have done it in the same manner as shown by a group in which a stiff St. Mary holds the body of her child with arms and legs rigid, broken into a rectangle and supported by the massive pedestal formed by the Virgin's knees. The Virgins of Auvergne reappear in certain sitting Virgins. But these insensible idols are but distant relatives of Sainte Foy of Conques, sometimes adorned with necklaces, and they have no historical connection with her. There has been no transmission, but an accidental coincidence of conception.

When carving a Gothic saint from his log, the *dievdirbis* to a certain extent unveils his past. The energetic tool of the peasant rips off the bark formed in the course of years and lays bare the primitive form. Square images issue from opulent statues. The outlines are simplified and schematized. In the suffering features of Christ are expressed the ferocious features of a more ancient god. Movements again become jerky, the bodies stiffen, become shorter or longer and again attain the coarseness and power of bygone days. The rudeness of the means, the necessity of solid construction, the innate taste for geometric forms, coupled with a craving for the strange and the supernatural, bring about the same deformations as we find in the statuary of the 12th century, certain aspects of which also show popular traits. The hermit of the Nemunas river dreams the same dreams as the makers of images and the monks who once decorated the small Romanesque churches. It is this fraternity of forms and of technique, which has made it possible to reconstruct an ancient and unknown world.

Strange contradictions thus characterize the principal aspects of this sculpture. It is somewhat indifferent with regard to the great Western currents which have left fine traces in this country. It bears deep marks of an epoch of which we possess but few monuments. And finally it shows certain striking affinities with an art which had never been known in these regi-

ons. But, most of all, it belongs to the forest. Its statuettes still show the structure and retain the fragrance of newly hewn wood. Even in our days the *dievukai* have not changed. It is this faithfulness towards the world into which they were born which alone can explain their permanence.



PAINTING AND ENGRAVING

Painting has a character different from that of sculpture. Though a religious art too, it has less stable traditions and more spontaneous techniques. The pictures are generally painted on wooden panels covered with a plastering of stucco, but also sometimes on tissue, on glass or even on paper. The artist himself prepared his colors with oil or eggs. The subjects did not differ much from those of the statuary. Several compositions: St. George, who figures in nearly all *numai* of Žemaitija, the Crucifixion, the Pietà, the Virgin of the Seven Sorrows and St. Rochus, are often directly inspired by them. Sacred images to be found in the churches or illustrating books also served as models, but the themes were not always faithfully reproduced. New designs appeared and some of them are of a charming naiveté, as for example the hands of the Lord emerging from a bank of clouds and throwing big loaves of bread to the kneeling peasants. The design has however no stability, the composition is irregular, the gamut of colors is limited to two or three tones. These very shortcomings give them their poetic charm. As painted by the "douanier Rousseau" of the village, Christ and the Saints are near to the people, their awkwardness gives them more truth than a correct design would have been able to do. Sometimes the traits are more definite, thick contours emphasize the outline and the decorative effect In most cases these engravings hail from Lower Lithuania and the most ancient samples which have been preserved date from the beginning of grows more distinct. The splashes of color are distributed with generosity,

oversized flowers and ornaments appear on the clothes at the will of the brush. A riper art however manifests itself in engravings.

Here too the artist is inspired by the wood. As in painting the elements of technique are introduced by the currents of Western Art. To be sure, at first copies were made of the incunabula and the illustrated books collected by the clergy, but new sources of inspiration were soon found. Engravings came from Germany and further distant lands. A number of compositions were inspired by works of French popular art, and may be the trade in playing cards, that were also engraved on wood, had its share in their diffusion. Epinal pictures may also have followed rhe same channels.

154. The Crucifixion, wood-cut, 18th cent

the 17th century. One St. George is dated 1710, and the most recent sheet dates from 1853. From 1865 until 1904 this production was practically stopped by the Russian *ukase* on printing. During that time only a few new editions with changed inscriptions have been issued. And since the end of the period of suppression this art seems to have been unable to recover. At present a large part of the originals and of the printed copies is in Germany, many are in Poland and only a few have remained in Lithuania.

The subjects are exclusively of a religious or didactic character. Among the themes treated in common with sculpture, we again find St. George, Christ at Nazareth, St. John of Nepomuk, St. Anne, stygmatized St. Francis, in short, all the familiar figures, but on the one hand the composition is not always the same, and on the other, there is a much larger variety of prototypes. Not only drawings were made of venerated statues, but also of etchings, popular engravings, paintings by old masters, such as a Christ attributed to Roger van der Weyden, which had been at Vilnius, the Coronation of the Holy Virgin by Rubens, certain compositions of Paolo Veronese, copied from deformed reproductions thereof, a Crucifixion by Dürer. Such copies were far from being true and sometimes whole parts are missing. Cuts were made and also additions. On the same panel fragments of various origin are thrown into one. Famous works copied from inexact models often become irrecognizable.

The procedure followed by the artist is very simple. On a wooden panel usually of lime prepared a long time in advance, a coat of wax and chalk was spread, on which the delineation was drawn by means of a pencil or a pen. The design was then carved with a knife. The typographic ink stamped in large slabs often exceeds the contours. The copies were printed on a rudimentary press or by application of the paper. The engravings are sometimes colored by hand. There are large compositions requiring a juxtaposition of several panels, the height of which sometimes attains one meter. Sometimes it is a group, sometimes a single figure, sometimes a succession of scenes set side by side or above each other. In the first case a crowd of figures suggestive of a miniature is represented.

The laboriously handled tool traced energetic, irregular lines devoid of grace. Series of parallel lines indicate the various shades and define the outline. Heaven and clouds, sun rays and trees, in short, the whole sur-

155. The Holy Family, wood-cut

roundings of the world in which the persons represented live, are indicated by the same awkward method. Everything is equally filled in. The forms squeeze each other and even invade the background. The horror of the vacuum of archaic art is here combined with baroque profusion. All the figures are aligned on the same plane. Hierarchic distribution according to schedule creates around the principal hero a space devoid of depth, in which, as on a stage, churches and houses, hills and plants are thronged together. An ordinary man is only half the size of a Saint. Nature is reduced to symbolic ornament, flowers such as adorn trunks, broad leaves on their stems. It is an abridged landscape. Sometimes a perspective of a sort is indicated, but the fields rise as on an arras hung on a wall or form a pedestal for the scenes represented. The characters do not live in a real world, but amidst garlands, glories, rays, cascades of stars and clouds resembling a circus of chaotic rocks. In spite of this baroque luxury, there still prevails a heaviness and hardness of expression suggestive more of the Middle Ages than the classic century.

In this framework of superimposed zones with all the attributes of ancient mysteries, in a system ruled by the old dogmas, the angels and the Madonnas once more find the atmosphere of Gothic drama. As in sculpture the artist spontaneously invokes the spirit of another age. Notwithstanding this unity of character and technique it is possible to discern several currents; a severe style, a flowery style and a sumptuous style. The severe style is evidenced especially in subjects borrowed from sculpture. An image reproducing a rustic deity remains impregnated by its coarseness, the Christ of Nazareth, erect with tied hands and an oversized head, is drawn with a few strokes only, a monumental figure placed in a niche. The etching all around intensifies its shadow and gives the body the aspect of a tree trunk. The same arrangement prevails in other scenes, all the numerous figures are placed on superimposed levels, without losing their frontal attitude. Their coarse and dense masses are pressed in a frame that seems not to have been made to their measure. The flowery style is also used in large and full compositions. Small fragile figures would not have been adequate for its vegetation. Leaves and petals are strewn upon their clothes. Uniform surfaces are replaced by a bed of flowers, a kind of luxuriant carpet. Our Lady of Loretto, decorated like a Virgin in a reliquary, is surrounded by the garland of a mystic rosary

adorned with medallions. St. John of Nepomuk seems to grow out of a flower basket. Elsewhere stars resembling sunflowers dot the firmament. In this luxuriant garden the figures however maintain their robust character. This stability gives way only under the weight of the rays and folds which streak and break up the surface in all directions. The Saints, both male and female, become larger and fatter. Little full cheeked angels emerge from the clouds. Clothes puff up. This heavy and awkward whirl is what may be described as baroque.

The sense of the monumental only disappears completely from sheets on which several scenes are represented; the panel is made up of several parts, each of which represents one or several independent compositions, it is a mosaic of paintings framed in a ribbon composed of foliage and flowers. The drawing becomes schematic, the descriptive element prevails, but there is no continuity in the narrative. The fragments of a film are placed side by side, sometimes without sequence. Elements of the same group are not always linked together, they form several distinct rows. As in small statuary comprizing several figures, the movements are stiff, a recumbent figure is drawn with the same outlines as an erect figure. One might think that it had been knocked down. As represented in this little world, Sacred History and sermons assume the character of rustic tales.

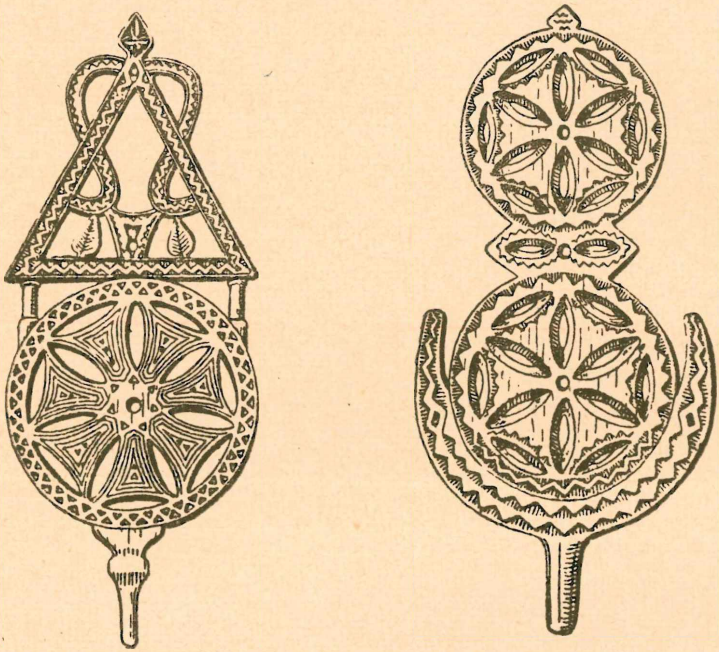
These apparently contradictory characters are sometimes present in one and the same work. The figure of St. George of 1710, the most ancient and one of the most beautiful that have come down to us, impresses both by the amplitude of its conception and by the abundance of detail. On this large sheet is seen a knight in full armour, ostrich feathers waving from his helmet, careering with his cloak flying in the wind on a pied steed with short legs awkwardly attached. He is spearing a medieval dragon, ferocious and ridiculous at the same time. All around him, in the rare empty spaces left by the main subject, between the legs of his horse and round about its tail and its head, are crowded small houses, suspended in empty space, a small queen crowned by angels and plants. Being himself of supernatural stature the Saint has to fight his way in an overcrowded world. By its theme, as well as by its execution, this engraving, in which a childish gravity is mingled with flowers and vast undulations, may be said to recapitulate and illustrate all the various aspects of the whole of Lithuanian imagery.

DOMESTIC ART

During the long winter months of enforced retirement in his dwelling the peasant does not remain inactive, he repairs and manufactures all the things he needs. He also tries to decorate and embellish familiar objects and his faithful tools, such as the spinningwheel, the distaff, the loom, the beating arms, the sheaths of the whetstones, the napkin-rings and the nutcrackers. Similarly to the *dievdirbis,* he cuts and carves wood. He uses it even to make such appliances as are generally made of iron; primitive ploughs made of oak were still in existence a few decades ago, the locks are often a device made of boards, the bells for the cattle are made of hollowed-out branches and emit the dull sound of a rattle, and last but not least, so are most of his musical instruments, the *"trimitai"* trumpets, 1.50 or 2 meters long, wrapped in bark, — the *"kanklés",* a sort of zither with an archaic box. Certain containers, tuns, buckets, pails and devices for measuring agricultural produce, are composed of simple staves held together by rings. Sometimes they are made of bark so tightly plaited that they can hold water. Such plaited vessels are used in Žemaitija in the manufacture of beer. The liquid within them is heated by means of incandescent stones. Even in our days such enormous *"dundulos"*, resembling Greek jars serve as containers for flour and cereals.

Part of the crockery is made of wood. Cups, spoons, saucers, goblets for tasting spirits, all present a great variety of shapes. Each type serves a special purpose. Sometimes they have a ritual meaning. The museum of Kaunas (Kovno) owns twin cups, from which bride and bridegroom drank on their wedding-day. It is cut from a single piece of wood in the shape of a horn, and is the equivalent of the ancient rhyton. The raw material used, readily submits to treatment with a knife and favors carved decoration. Sometimes the wood is engraved in the manner of a bone by simple striation, sometimes it is carved. The many sharp edges produce an effect of dry lights and shades. Sometimes a board is entirely perforated and the designs seem to have been punched out. This method is chiefly applied to window frames. The two other methods are applied to all sorts of objects. Designs containing figures are rare. Distaves and beaters are often decorated with birds or two flaming hearts, such are gifts exchanged between lovers. But generally the ornamentation consists of vegetation or geometrical figures. The design of plants is most frequently made by slight incisions. On thread-like stalks large leaves and flowers are suspended, spread as on a sheet of a herbarium. The contours are regular and supple. They freeze and become harder the deeper the incision. Work with a cutting tool entails regular movements, which produce both straight lines and curves. It is under such technical conditions that the abstract style is originated. Zigzags, crosses, triangles unite in a thousand ways and are ceaselessly renewed. On plane surfaces prisms and diamond shaped points are cut. Inside the large figures small designs are cut, a trellis of polygones and rosaces. These "ornamented ornaments" are placed side by side, they intersect and fit into each other, and in their apparent monotony an infinite variety is manifested. A distaff and a spindle, thus carved with care and precision, become precious objects.

No doubt this gamut contains elements which are common to nearly all rustic arts, and the tool everywhere leads the hand to execute the same designs. The geometric themes entail designs which very often coincide. Some of them composed of interlaced circles are common to all ages and to all countries, they can be seen on the ceramics of Susa, on Roman mosaics, Syrian lintels and Merovingian manuscripts. The shepherds of the Pyrenees reproduce them on their crockery up to the present day. But the distribution and the place of these designs lends them



156. Carved Distaves, used on a Spinning-Wheel

a personal note. Sometimes the decoration is made in high relief, the edges disappear and the outlines become more subtle, while maintaining their clear-cut precision. Plants again invade the panels, flowers crush each other on the polished surfaces of the boards. Instead of graphic roses, we find an abundant vegetation. Small baroque volutes sometimes mingle with rustic decoration. This decorative sculpture sometimes takes on a grotesque character, especially on walking sticks and nutcrackers. Such walking sticks are entirely covered with geometrical ornaments and are crowned with a head or a torso. Some of them serve as marks of distinction or of clanship. etc. These so-called *"krivulés"* belong to chieftains and are passed from hand to hand in case of a summons or the transmission of an order. The nutcrackers represent monsters with powerful jaws, in which can be recognized domestic animals, the fauna of the steppes or grimacing human faces.

The great wooden coffers serving at the same time as trunks and cup-

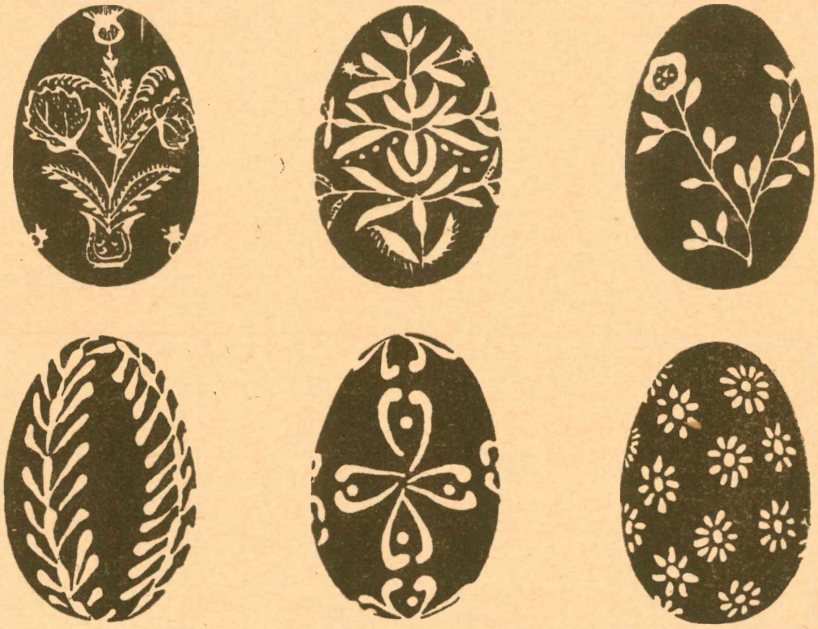
boards in which the family valuables are piled up, are generally decorated with paintings. On a monotone background are carved idealized flowers, framed in rectangles or planted in pots, such as tulips, roses, daisies, harebells. They often sprout forth on the same straight or undulated twig at regular intervals. Animals, such as horses, cocks and hens, oriental lions and even the image of a mermaid with the tail of a fish are less frequent. The colors are usually brillant blue, yellow and white. The strokes of the brush are energetic and clear. They contrast by their breadth and their spontaneousness, with the minutely calculated ornament carved with a knife. In the *klétis,* with their bare walls, such large painted panels play the part both of pictures and frescoes. In the same spirit the village painter applies himself to the decoration of window shutters, the doors of houses, small chapels and crosses. Among the art still in existence, ceramics plays a large part. The tumuli, *antkapiai* and *piliakalniai*, have yielded numerous prehistoric specimens. There is earthenware of solid and simple profile thrown by hand. Such vessels are sometimes narrow with an elongated neck, and sometimes low and wide. Large plates with vertical or oblique edges have also been found. The bottom is generally flat. The decoration is composed of fir trees or saw-teeth or indentations. These elements subsist up to the present time. The peasant pottery follows the same procedures and is decorated with the same ornaments. The gray, black, brown or red earth is modelled on a primitive throw, dried and baked over a moderate fire. Here the whole gamut of the ancient designs can be seen, such as dentelated and undulated designs, rhombs, crosses. They run along the rims, cover the bodies and sometimes even extend to the bottoms. The designs become more regular, but their elements do not change. Even when provided with improved tools, the potter returns incessantly to the same old designs. This constancy however does not exclude an enrichment of the craft. The number of types increases, milk-jugs, — *"puodynė"* or *"dubenėlis"* — with oval bodies, large neck and without handles, water-jugs, — *"ąsotis"* — which resemble the antique oenochoi, bowls, saucers, special vessels designed as containers for the meals of the workers in the fields and with a double body connected by a single handle. Sometimes the clay jugs are wrapped in plaited bark.

The ceramic items are nowadays glazed and influenced by painting, the ornaments are now not only engraved, but also painted with a brush. New

figures appear, stars of intersected lines, flowers similar to those painted on trunks. They radiate from the centre of the plates and dishes, emphasize the curves of the bodies, the rims and the necks. They are animated designs which seem to have been invented by the rapid movement of a clever hand, and which always occupy the place intended for them. Here also the colors are free and vivacious. Yellow, red, blue spots are clearly visible on a ground often of a darker color, brown, gray or green. When covered by a varnish or glazed, such objects which are made of a somewhat coarse material, frequently assume metallic tints. The simple shapes usual in household ware, become more complicated in vases, candlesticks, small pots designed for the decoration of dwellings and holy water containers. Sometimes the design is even overloaded, multiple bodies, small vases set on rims of the main body, double, triple or even multiple handles sinuously undulating, undulated or embossed rims, handles rolled up in baroque convolutions. Curve and countercurve, used with discretion, lend a singular elegance to this robust pottery.

Zoomorphic themes which are not used in pottery, are developed with much imagination in children's whistles. There is a distinct series of odd figures, horsemen, rams with big horns, birds, dogs, horses, fantastic monsters. With their arms formed in guise of small handles, their bodies reduced to a trunk and the limbs to small projecting branches, they resemble the schematized statuettes of archaic Greece. As everywhere else popular ceramic art has been threatened by industrial production. But in the neighbourhood of Biržai, Radviliškis and Vilkoniai, potteries are still in existence and the potters are still active. Those of the region of Biržai have managed to maintain their old reputation.

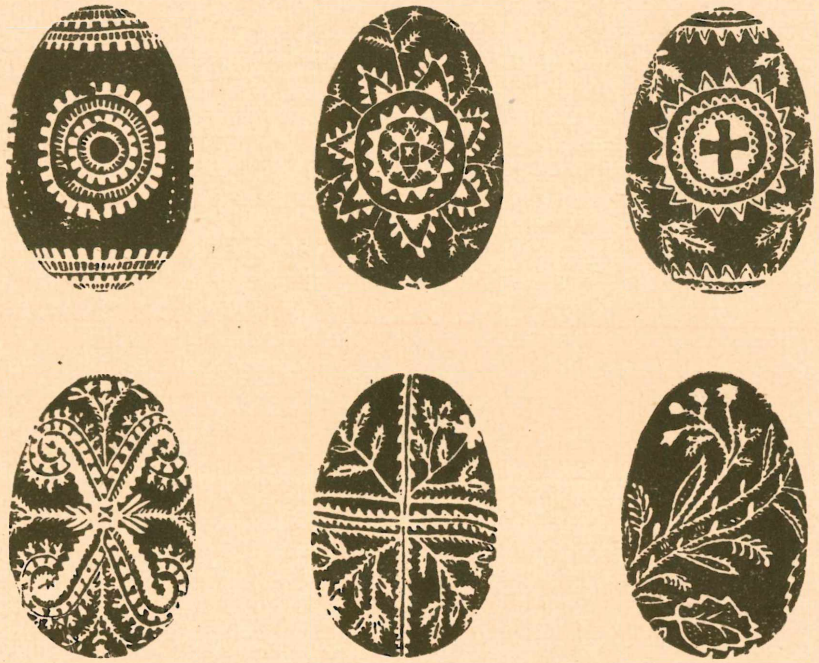
Certain designs of the ceramic are also employed in the decoration of egg-shells which is still common in most parts of the countries of Eastern Europe, in Poland, Roumania, Czechoslovakia and Russia, though not with the neighbouring Latvians. In Lithuania this custom is mentioned in documents of the 16th century. Egg shells are not only painted at Easter, but, in certain regions, at other feasts also, as e. g. on St. George's Day or at Whitsuntide. This is done in two different manners; either the eggs are plunged in the colored liquid and the design is then engraved with a knife, or in imitation of the technique of the Javanese batik, the figures are designed by the application of wax and the egg is afterwards soaked in



157.—162. Decorated Eggs

the color. When the wax is removed, the ornaments appear in white. A great variety of shades is obtained by using a series of colored baths. Some of the designs used in pottery are retained, such as firs, rosaces, stars, dots, zigzags, a few types of flowers, but the design is small and condensed, it covers the egg with a network of lace. The potter turns goldsmith. These designs have distinct names, the adder, chicken's feet, the rake, butterflies, snow crystals. But these names are more or less symbolical and have only a very distant connection with the corresponding design. In general the background is dark, black or dark brown, blue or red. It resembles island wood more than egg shell.

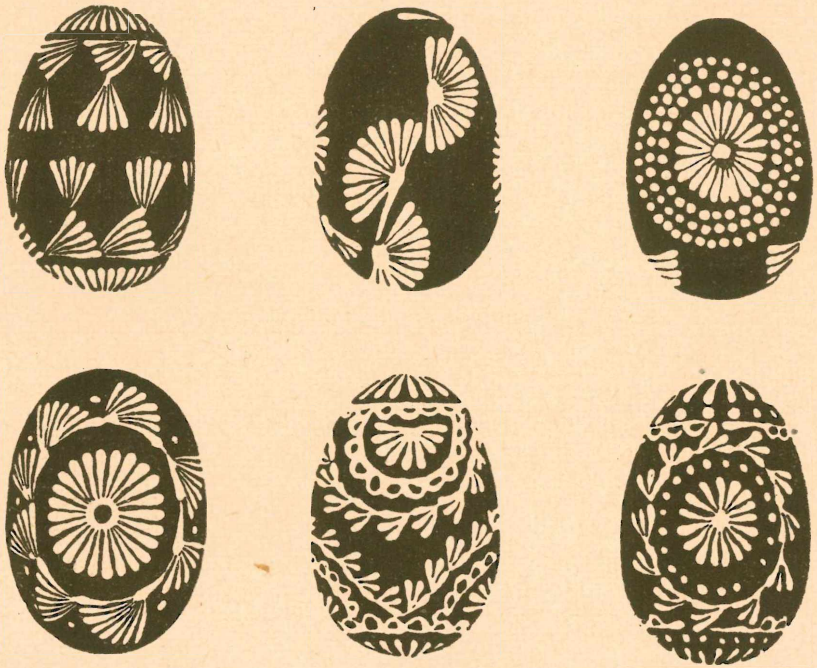
Besides wood and ceramics, work on textiles, wool, cotton and particulary linen is one of the richest and most ancient branches of popular art. On Latvian territory tissues of the Iron Age have been discovered, with metal ornaments resembling those still in use in Lithuania, but in wool. Prototypes of the latter must certainly also have existed. Later certain



163.—168. Decorated Eggs, Pattern scratched with Knife

elements may have been imported from the East. The word *"kilimas"*, which means carpet, is directly derived from the Asiatic *kelims*. Unfortunately their patterns have not been preserved, but the foreign inventories of the 17th century assign them a good place. Linen and fabrics have always been renowned and were exported as far as Hungary.

Tissues, embroideries made for the decoration of the home or of clothes are the work of women. They make them by hand and by means of archaic devices, such as the spinning-wheel, distaff, spindle and loom, which have undergone but little change in the course of centuries. Linen is used alone or mixed with cotton for sheets, table-cloths, napkins and towels. In the large cloths, which are so solid that they are handed on from generation to generation, the damask decoration is of an infinite variety. Raw linen and bleached linen, linen mixed with cotton threads intercrossed in all directions combine to bring forth designs in checks, stars or intersec-



169.—174. Decorated Eggs, Pattern laid on with Bees-Wax

ting circles. Designs in gray on gray, which are sometimes very intricate, produce light effects which relieve the austerity of the material used. Towels are made on the occasion of a birth. They are also used to cover a coffin. Being much smaller than sheets, they require smaller cleverly laid out designs. In the district of Biržai they are often given a colored band along the edge, generally red, but sometimes blue, or long plaited fringes. The lace that sometimes borders them is made with a needle or a spindle.

Colors are sometimes used in the cloths, but chiefly in clothing. Two item are of special interest, the *"juostos"* and the *"žiurstai"*, i. e. belts and aprons. In the former the most ancient designs are preserved, whereas the latter are remarkable for the splendor and richness of their decoration. The *juostos* make use of several techniques and of different looms, some of which are complicated, whereas others are so rudimentary that a shep-

herdess can work them while watching the cattle. They are made of woven, plaited or sewn strips. Originally they were made of wool, but later bleached or coarse linen and even cotton bought in town were added.

The most ancient belts were plaited. They are decorated with simple zigzags and only in a few tones, white, red, blue. Some of them may still be found in the neighbourhood of Zarasai, Panevėžys and Ukmergė, but they become increasingly rare. The sewn *juostos* of Suvalkai (Suvalki) too are seldom to be found. The method most frequently employed is weaving. The primitive specimens show but few colors, blue green, red, rarely black and white, with a brownish border. With the Dzūkai Lithuanians of the region of Merkiné, Alytus and Pūnia, white and red, prevail, but the scales show a a tendency to increase. Nevertheless, red, green, and yellow prevail. The designs are geometrical and formed of interwoven threads. Designs à la Grecque, swastikas with ramified branches, rosaces and complicated polygones are worked in lozenges, squares and crosses. Also ladders, hooks, angles, windows, rakes, goat's hooves, nuts, four-and fivefold eyes. The ornaments crowd together and form new designs, an uninterrupted series of straight lines and angles. The principal parts of the design occupies the centre of the strip. A double row of ornamentation appears on broad belts. Each side of the belt is framed by two small independent friezes.

Aprons are made by more skilful methods, certain techniques resemble those of the *kilimai*. The ornaments are often handsewn, and various systems are employed on the same apron. The preparation of the frame itself requires more care. The threads are colored by the weaver herself and work proceeds slowly. On a background of dark blue, garnet or green and even black, large designs are worked in linen or cotton. They are fleur de lys, idealized roses, or red, violet, blue and yellow tulips. The designs are combined in crosses, rosaces, zigzags, in solid broad ornaments, that remind one of the sumptuousness and the violent coloring of the ancient Spanish tissues. They are sub-divided into horizontal bands. The design is sometimes spread over the surface, sometimes it is framed by rays. Such designs, standing out against the background, maintain the character of a coat of arms. The tulip, one of the four flowers dear to the decoration of the East, which has been known in this country ever since prehistoric times, appears there as an emblem. These *žiurstai* are worn everywhere, but they all of them come from Suvalkai, the district of

Mariampolé and of Kalvarija. At Klaipéda their decoration consists of several finely embroidered horizontal strips. They are not only ornaments, but also symbols of virtue. In some villages it is considered improper to be seen without an apron. Once, at a market, a woman was asked to sell her apron and she considered herself outraged.

The other parts of the dress of a peasant woman are: a linen shirt with wide plaited sleeves, trimmed with small embroidered designs, a very ample woollen skirt, sometimes dark and plain and sometimes striped or of a Scottish pattern, gathered at the waist and a sleeveless vest, the *"kiklikas"*, a kind of corslet often made of valuable brocade, which made its first appearance in the early 19th century. According to Mr. Galauné, the first specimens were perhaps imported by the soldiers of Napoleon's "Grande Armée", on their retreat from Russia. In the neighbourhood of Klaipéda, the *kiklikai* are of dark velvet. Necklets of coral and especially of amber are worn on the neck. Their beads, either raw or cut in facets with a knife, have not only the value of gems, but are endowed with magic qualities, they belong to times gone by and to legend. These fossil drops of resin, which have been described by Tacitus and were sold by Ligurian traders who imported them into the countries of the Mediterranean and Black Sea area, where they were deemed to be more precious than gold and who therefore jealously kept the secret of their origin, often contained imprisoned insects and other mementoes of olden times.

Young girls wear on their heads a band of tissue held at the back by a flow of colored ribbons, married women wear instead *"nuometas"*, a sort of white veil several meters long, which is of Eastern origin, but was also adopted in the West, and Tertullian recommended its use. At first this fashion found but few followers and was later abandoned, but it became the rule for married women from 1300 until 1500. During that time a large number of themes of sculptural models were imported into Lithuania, the survivals of which have been described above. It is possible that this fashion followed the same route. And do not certain weavers, with their dour yet finely cut profiles encircled in white, resemble some statues of the Middle Ages? The veil with its folds and its ritual knots is sacred, it bestows upon such as have taken it a certain measure of authority and of office. With their head-dress resembling that of the Saints of the Church, these peasant women would seem to belong to a religious order.

Such are the principal aspects of this art, in their diversity and in their constancy. Shapes have been preserved in it by the permanence of both material and technique, and by patient tenacity. Wood resists Time like granite. Nothing is more difficult to change than the course of linen thread. The tool used forces the hand which holds it to repeat the same movements indefinitely. Prehistory persists in the architecture of houses, in the curves and angles of the decoration of pottery, in the solar circles of the crosses, in the geometric dreams of the weaving maid. Some of the designs belong to a vocabulary of primitive mankind which was in use in many countries and has been similary preserved there, yet they are rooted in the earth of this country, they are bound to it inseparably and are resurrected simultaneously with it.

A whole forgotten world comes down to us intact. It develops, but remains faithful to its principles even in its changes. Witnesses of past eras crowd in it. The great styles are not unknown to it. Gothic art, Baroque, Classicism, modern elements and the East enfold it, penetrate it and are reborn in it. Shapes grown obsolete elsewhere persist in this fixed and unchanging world. They are part of its cycle of survival.

The Middle Ages here find spontaneously their most ancient aspects and persist in spite of the new waves which migh have submerged them. Later eras too have left their mark, and even in our days their successive contributions have not disappeared. A simple jug may be a witness of a century long evolution. In the forest chapels, figures dwell which have come from far away, but are encompassed by the same idea. Ornaments belonging to the most different cultures are mingled on the same carved board. Chronology is upset. Sheltered by the Ages, popular art embraces them all. This diversity of sources however, does not disturb its unity. Having access to all inheritances it grows richer without betraying itself. Acquired elements are reconstructed, they bear impressed upon them the mark of its spirit, as does the soil which feeds it.

Jurgis Baltrušaitis

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Baltrušaitis J., *L'art populaire lithuanien* in *„Guide de l'Exposition de l'art populaire baltique au Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro" (Paris, 1935)*

Basanavičius J., Dr., *Lietuvių kryžiai archeologijos šviesoje (Vilnius, 1912)*

Bezzenberger A., *Über das litauische Haus* in *„Altpreußische Monatsschrift" (Königsberg, 1886)*

Brensztejn M., *Krzyze i kapliczki zmudzkie. Materijaly do sztuk ludowej na Litwie (Krakow, 1906)*

Dethlefsen R., *Bauernhäuser und Holzkirchen in Ostpreußen,* chapter *Lithuania (Berlin, 1911)*

Galaunė P., *Lietuvių liaudies menas (Kaunas, 1930)*

Ginet-Pilsudzki B., *Les croix lithuaniennes* in *„Extrait des archives Suisses des traditions populaires", Vol.* XX *(1916)*

— *Juostų albumas (Kaunas, 1928)*

— *L'art lithuanien (Malmoe, 1934)*

— *Lietuvių kryžiai (Kaunas)*

— *Lietuvių liaudies raižinių katalogas (Kaunas, 1927)*

— *Lietuvos liaudies skulptūros problemos* in monthly *„Vairas" (Kaunas)*

Rúkštelė A., *Lietuvių tautodailė (Kaunas, 1929)*

Salvatory G., *L'art rustique et populaire en Lithuanie (Milano, 1925)*

— *Sodžiaus menas,* periodical by *Žemės Ūkio Rúmai (Kaunas 1931—1934)*

Szukiewicz W., *Krzyze zdobne w gubernji Wilenskiej* in periodical *„Wisła". Vol.* XVII *(1903)*

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

IN TEXT

1. "Numas" of Žemaičiai - 2.—3. Porches - 4.—7. Windows and Doors - 8.—14. Iron Door Mountings - 15.—21. Gable Ornaments and Windows - 22. Dwelling-House, District of Alytus - 23. Dwelling-House, District of Stalupénai - 24. Fisherman's Dwelling at Nida - 25. Dwelling-House, District of Pagégiai - 26.—27. "Prieklétis" of the Storehouse - 28. "Klétis", Storehouse, District of Kedainiai - 29. "Klétis", Storehouse, District of Biržai - 30.—31. "Klétis", Storehouse, District of Biržai and Vilnius - 32. Wooden Church at Rumšiškés - 33. Wooden Church at Verpena - 34. Wooden Church at Gruzdžiai - 35. Wooden Church at Salantai - 36. Wooden Church at Kedainiai - 37. Wooden Church at Ukmergé - 38. Bell-Tower at Varputénai - 39. Bell-Tower at Degučiai - 40. Bell-Tower at Pasvalis - 41. Bell-Tower at Rozalimas - 42.—44. Iron Heads of Crosses - 45. Bell-Tower at Tryškiai - 46. Bell-Tower at Šaukénai - 47. Synagogue at Valkininkai - 48. Synagogue at Šaukénai - 49.—98. Crosses and Chapels - 99. Votive Chapel near Kremala - 100. Votive Chapel near Skiemoniai - 101. Votive Chapel near Jučiúnai - 102. Votive Chapel, Forest of Šilénai - 103.—107. Votive Chapels - 108.—125. Crosses and Chapels - 126.—152. Iron Heads of Crosses - 153. „Rúpintojélis", wood-cut, 18th cent. - 154. The Crucifixion, wood-cut - 155. The Holy Family, wood-cut - 156. Carved Distaves - 157.—174. Decorated Eggs

IN APPENDIX

1. "Klétis", Storehouse - 2. Porch of an old Farmhouse - 3. Wooden Church at Lioliai - 4. Wooden Church and Bell-Tower at Šaukénai - 5. Interior of a wooden Church - 6. Bell-Tower - 7.—15. Wooden Crosses - 16. Wooden Chapel - 17.—18. Wooden Crosses - 19. St. Casimir, wooden sculpture - 20. St. Anton, wooden sculpture - 21. St. John Nepomuk, wooden sculpture - 22.—24. "Rúpintojéliai", wooden sculptures - 25. Pieta, wooden sculpture - 26. St. George and the Dragon, wooden sculpture - 27. St. Anton, painting on wood - 28. St. Barbara, painting - 29. Pieta, painting on wood - 30. St. John Nepomuk, wood-cut - 31. The Trinity, wood-cut - 32. St. John Nepomuk, St. Ignace, St. Joseph, St. Barbara and St. Apolonia, wood-cut - 33. Virgin from Loretto, wood-cut - 34. St. Catherine, wood-cut - 35. St. Anna, wood-cut - 36. St. George and the Dragon, wood-cut - 37.—42. Carved Distaves - 43. A carved Wash-Fulling - 44. An old Salt-Box, wood-carved - 45. A carved Distaff - 46.—47. Old Towel-Racks, wood-carved - 48.—51. Painted Hope-Chests - 52. to 55. Clay-Jugs and Waterpot - 56. Various Clay Workings - 57. Painted Clay Pitchers and Plate - 58.—61. Gloves - 62. Socks - 63. Carpet Design - 64. Various Towel Patterns - 65. Tablecloths - 66. Bed Coverings - 67.—68. Borders of Bed-Sheets - 69.—73. Belts - 74. Aprons - 75.—82. Apron Designs

ILLUSTRATIONS

Photographs by E. Anker, B. Buračas, D. Čibas, M. K. Čiurlionis Gallery and Ethnographik Museum in Kaunas, J. Gimbutas, A. Ingelevičius, A. Rūkštelė, A. Tamošaitis, A. Varnas and others

1. "Klėtis", Storehouse
District of Biržai

2. Porch of an old Farmhouse

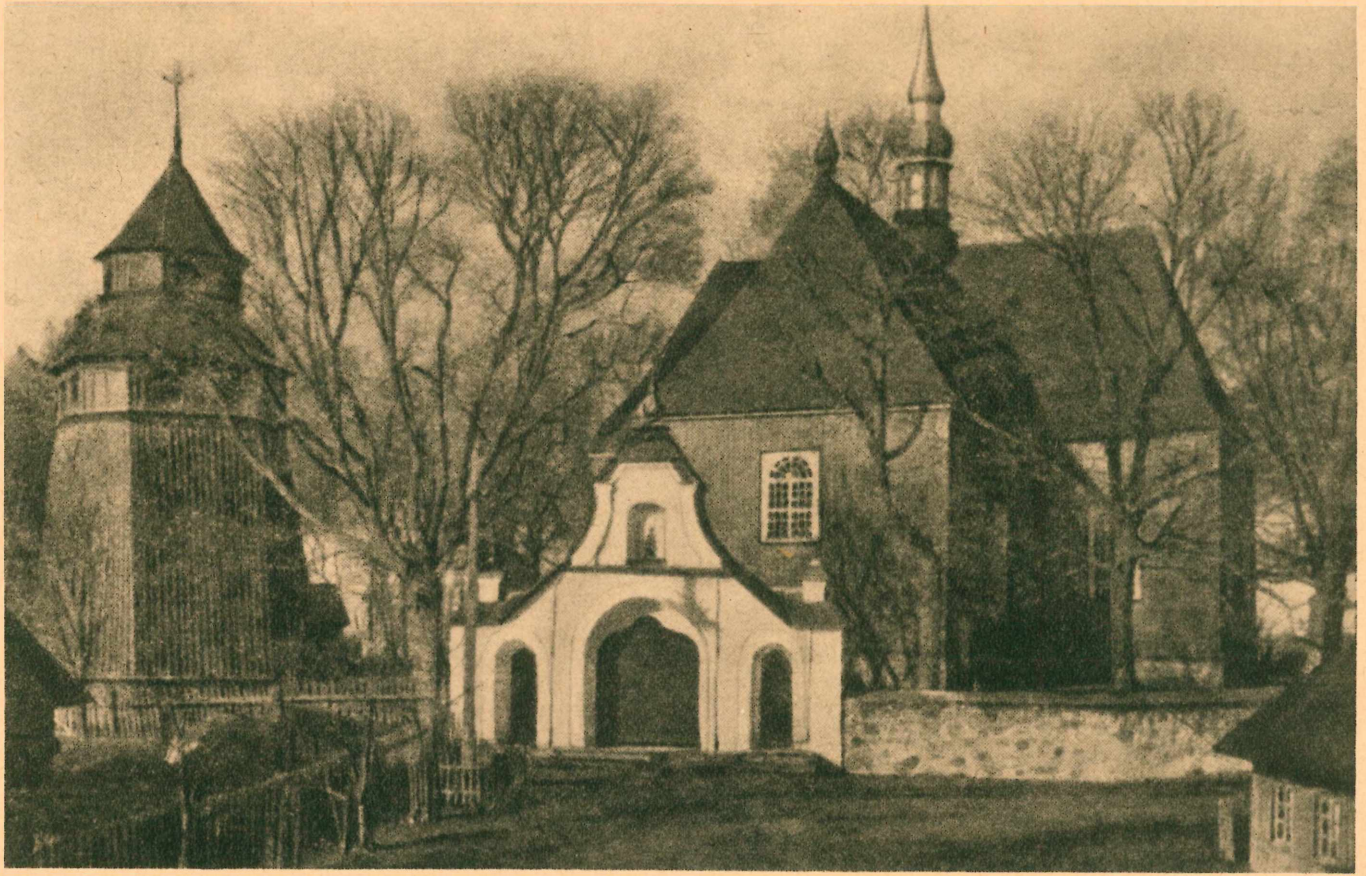
District of Utena

3. Wooden Church at Lioliai

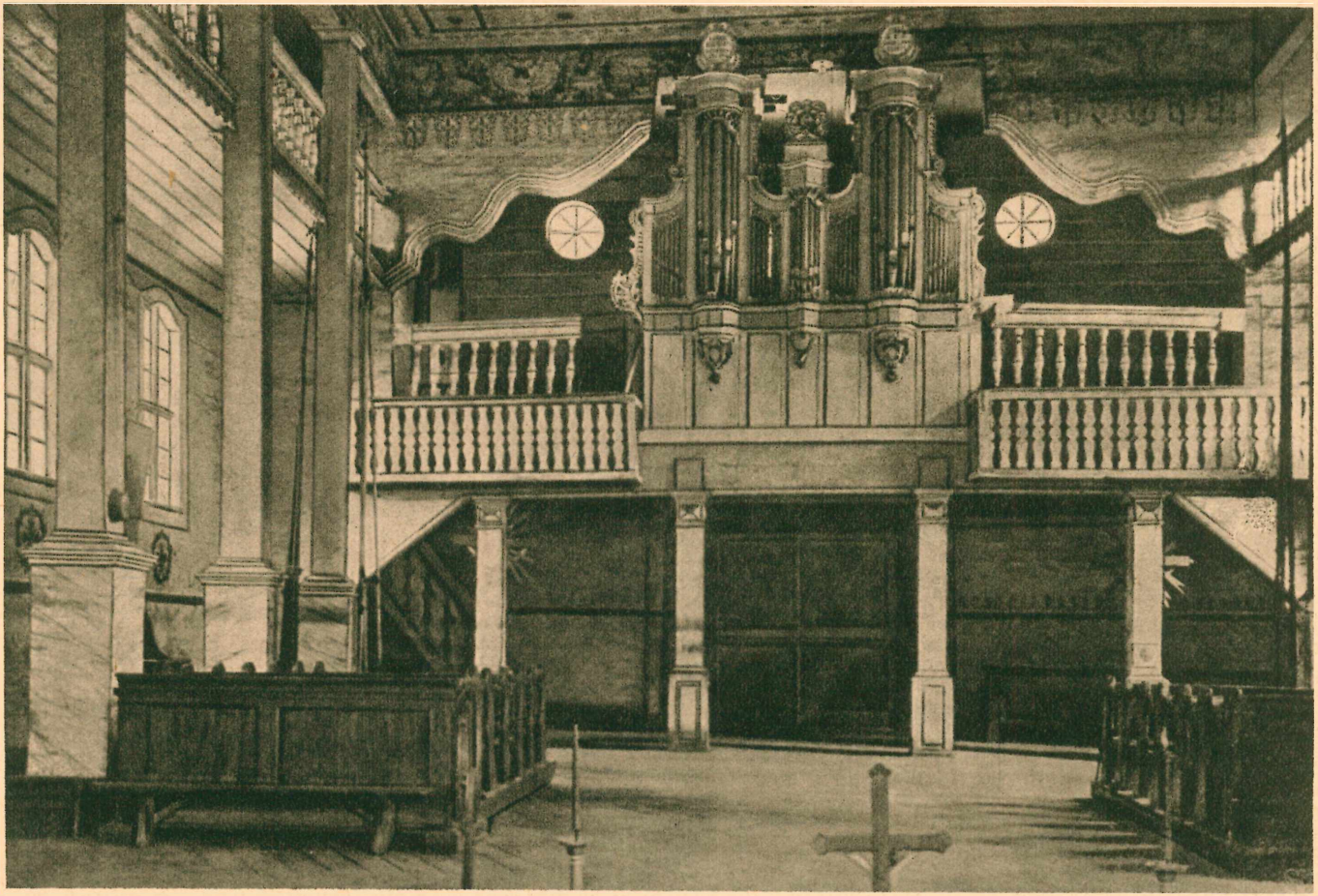
District of Raseiniai, 16th cent.

4. Wooden Church and Bell-Tower at Šaukėnai

District of Šiauliai

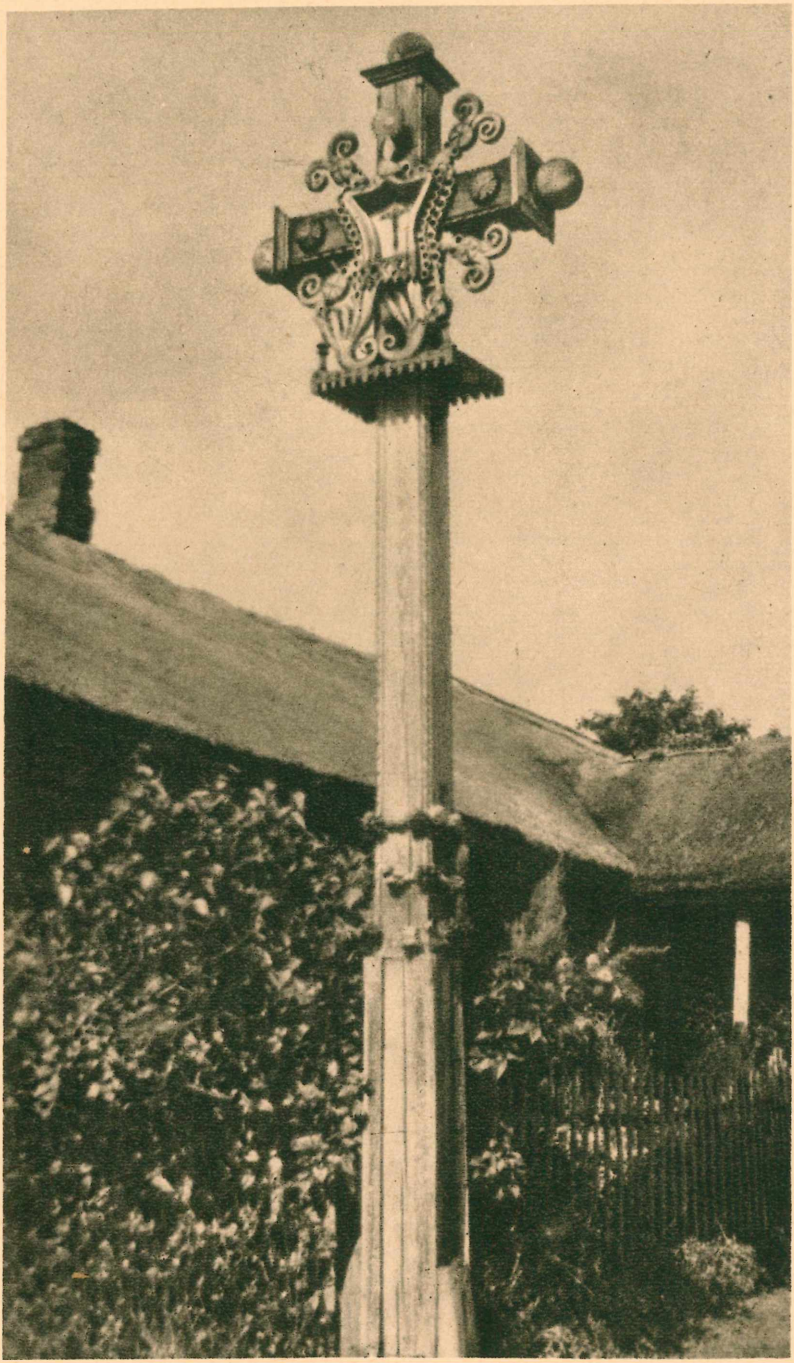


5. Interior of a wooden Church

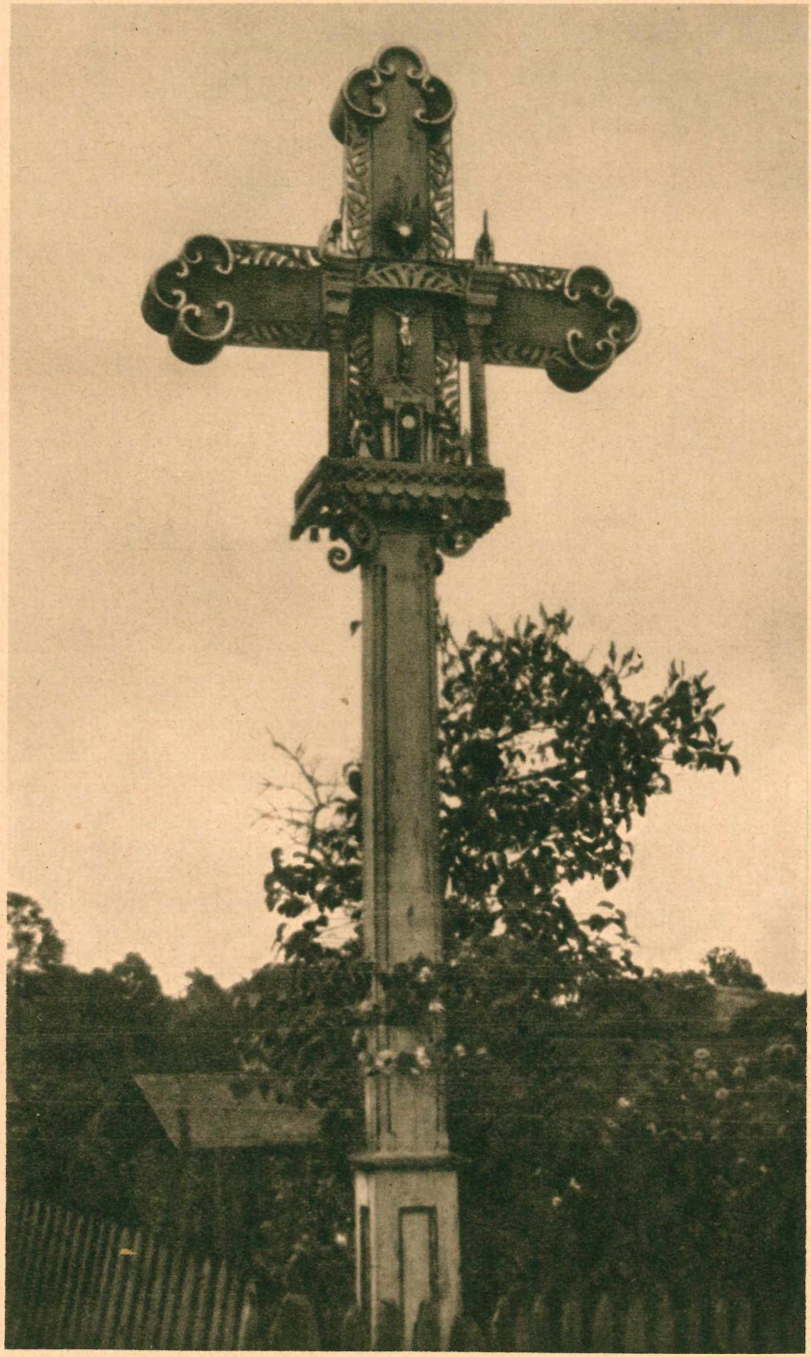


6. Bell - Tower
In Žemaitija

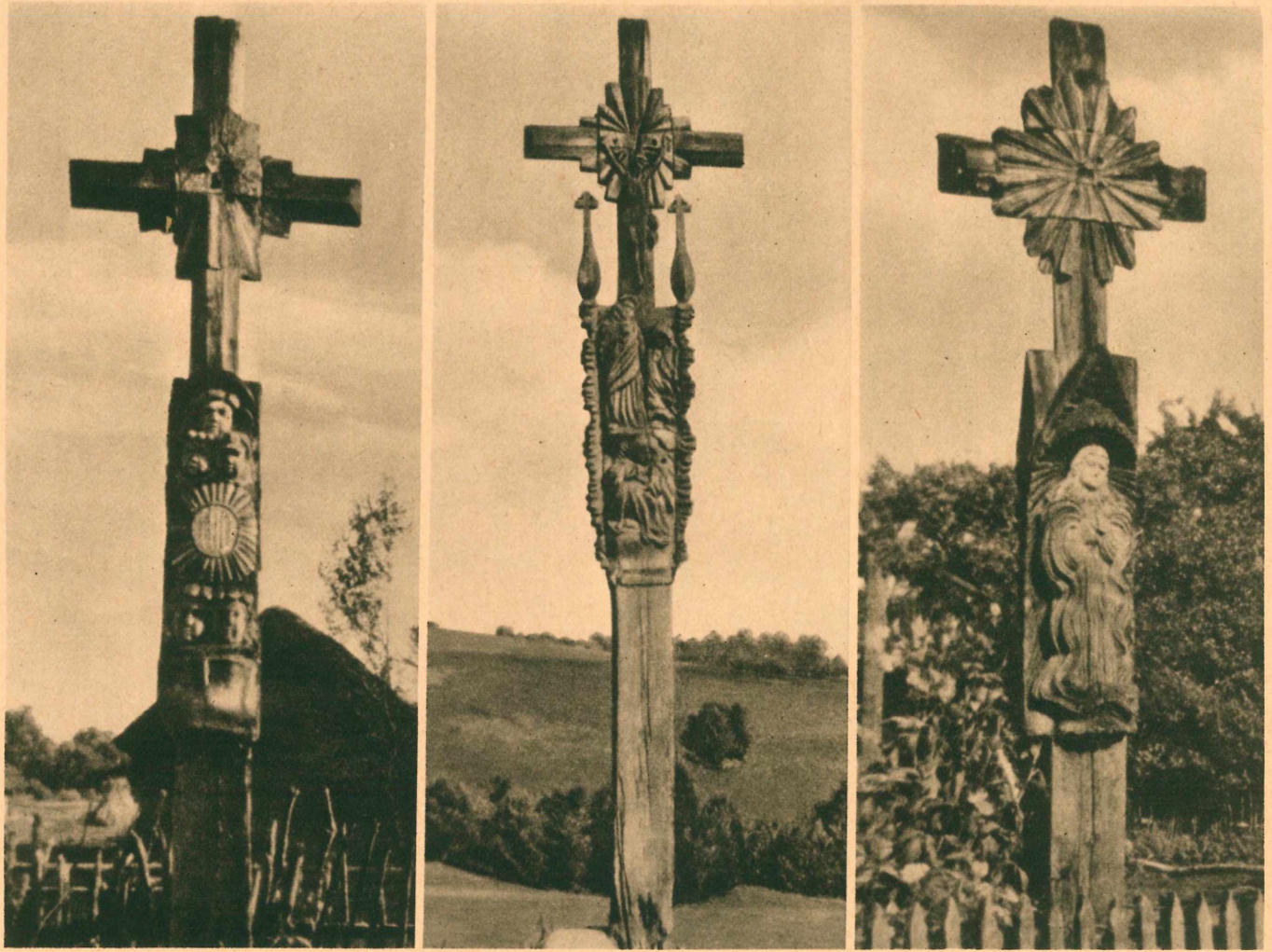
7. Wooden Cross
District of Zarasai



8. Wooden Cross
District of Zarasai



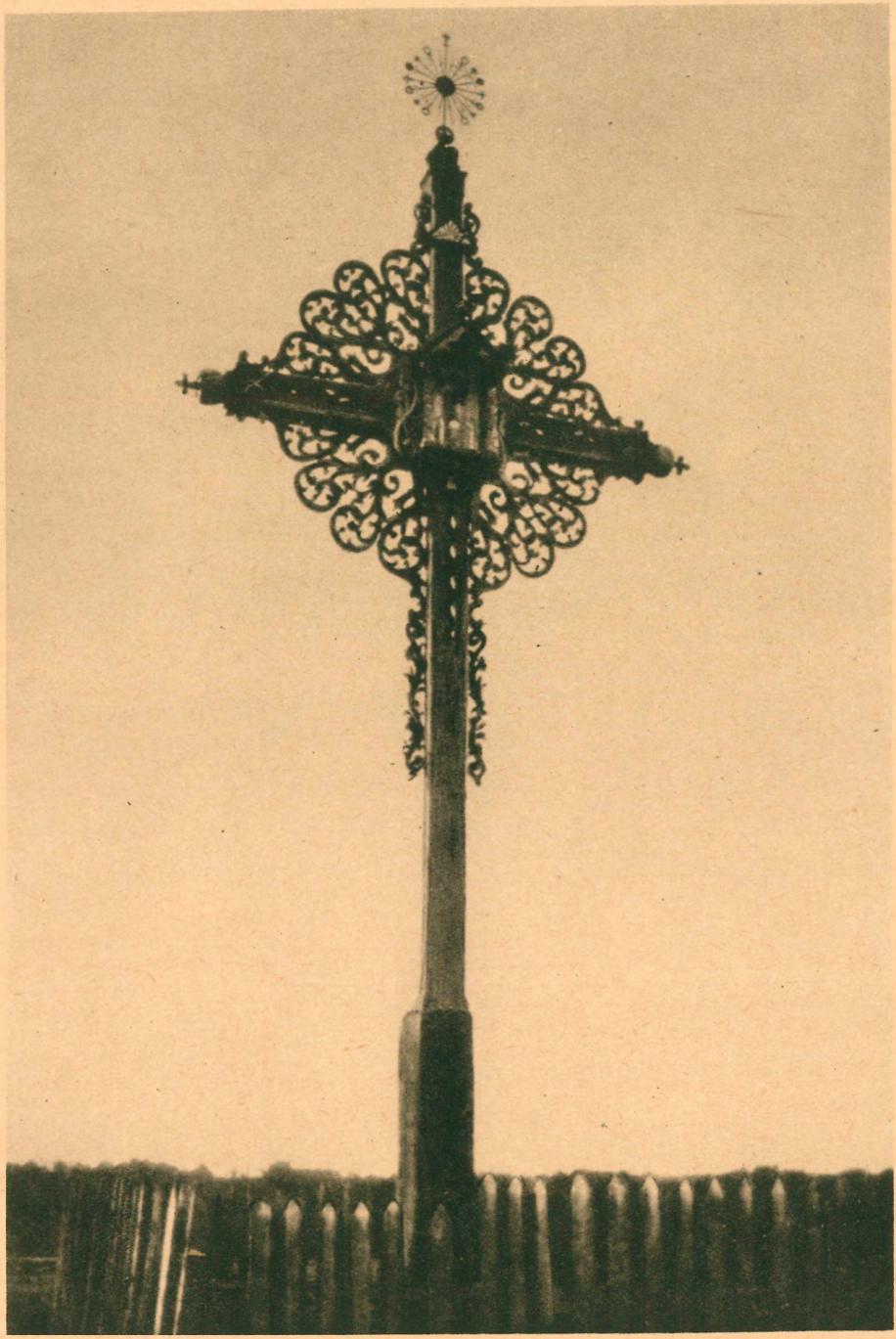
9.-11. Wooden Crosses
District of Kedainiai



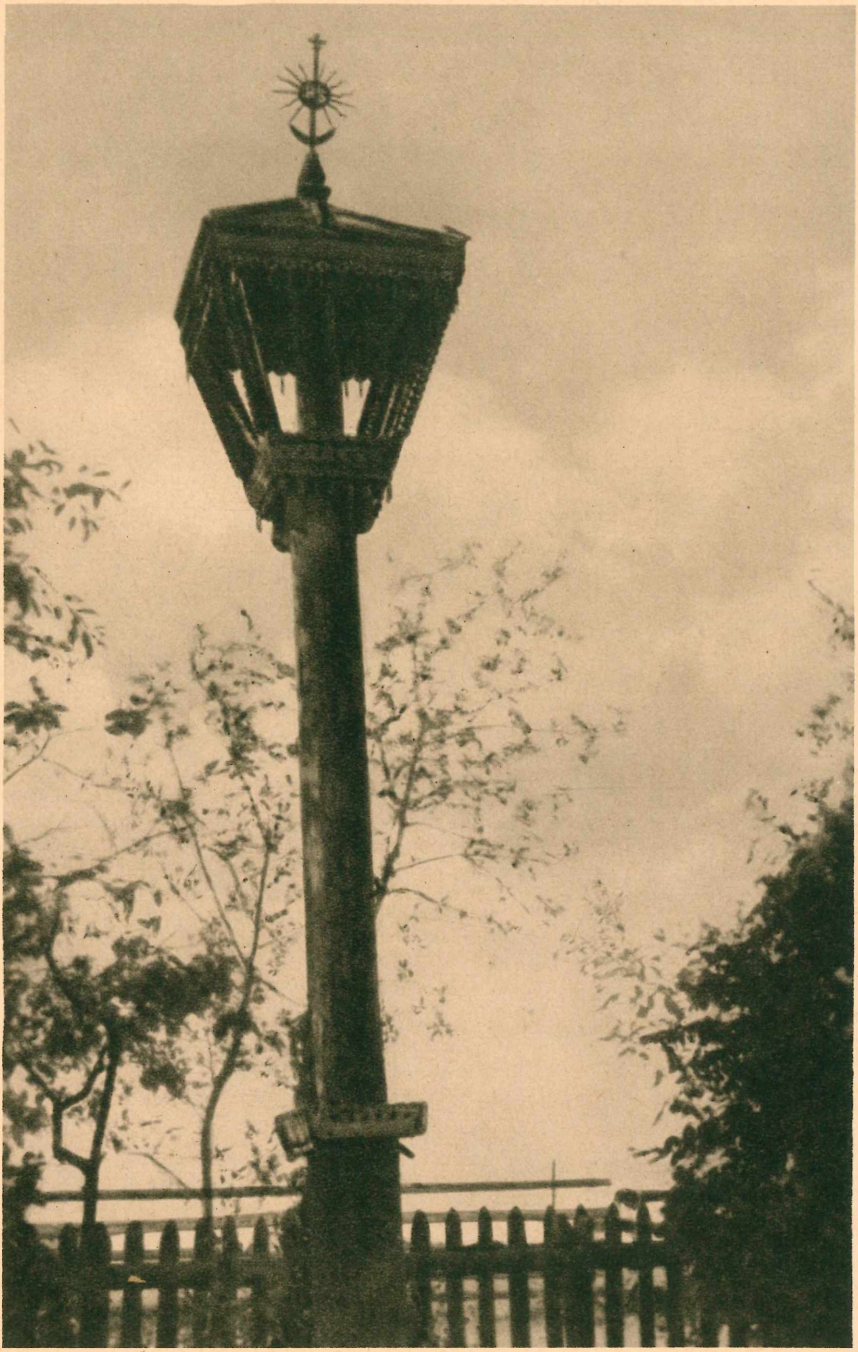
12. Wooden Cross

District of Utena

13. Wooden Cross
District of Kaunas

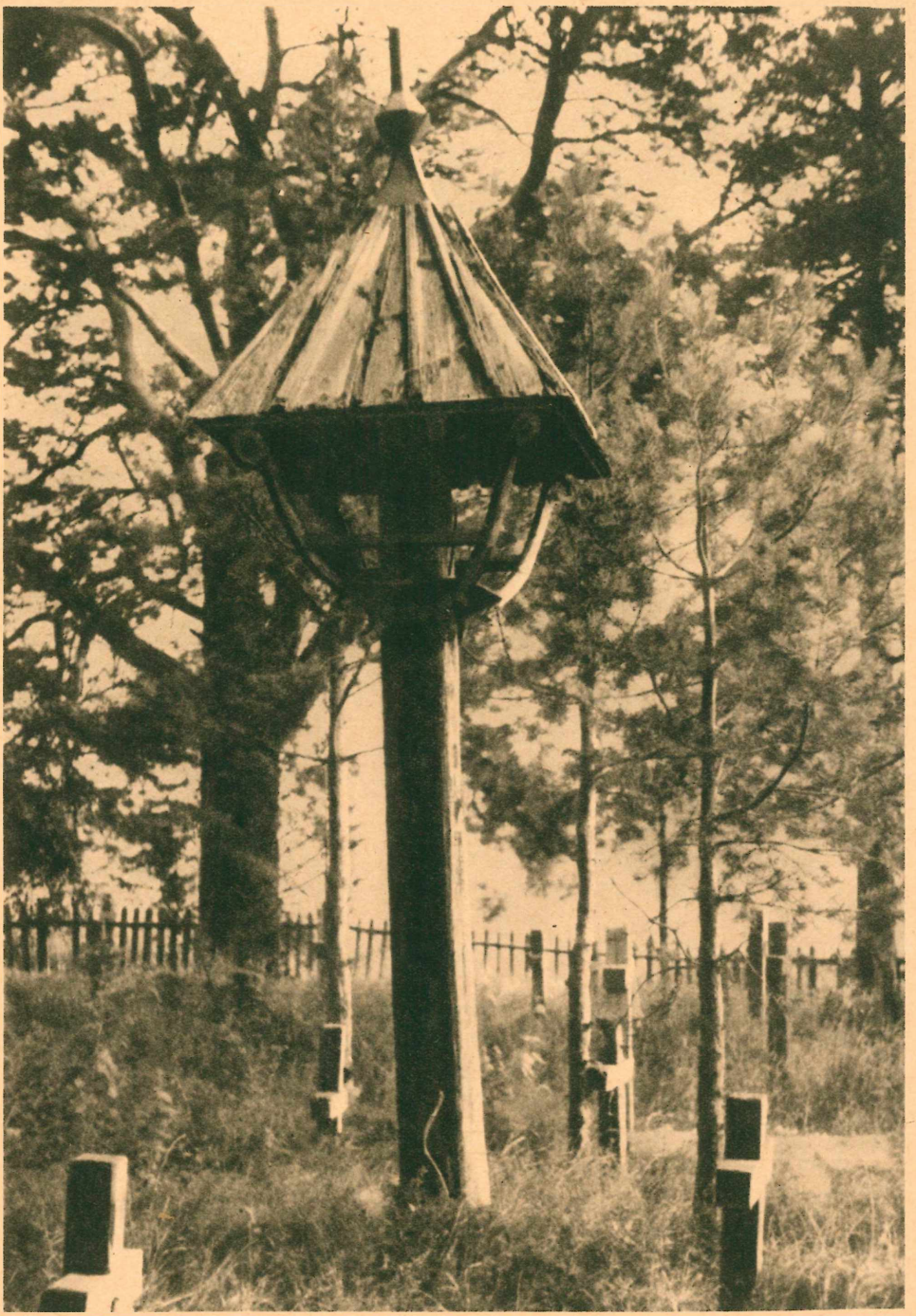


14. Wooden Cross
District of Rokiškis



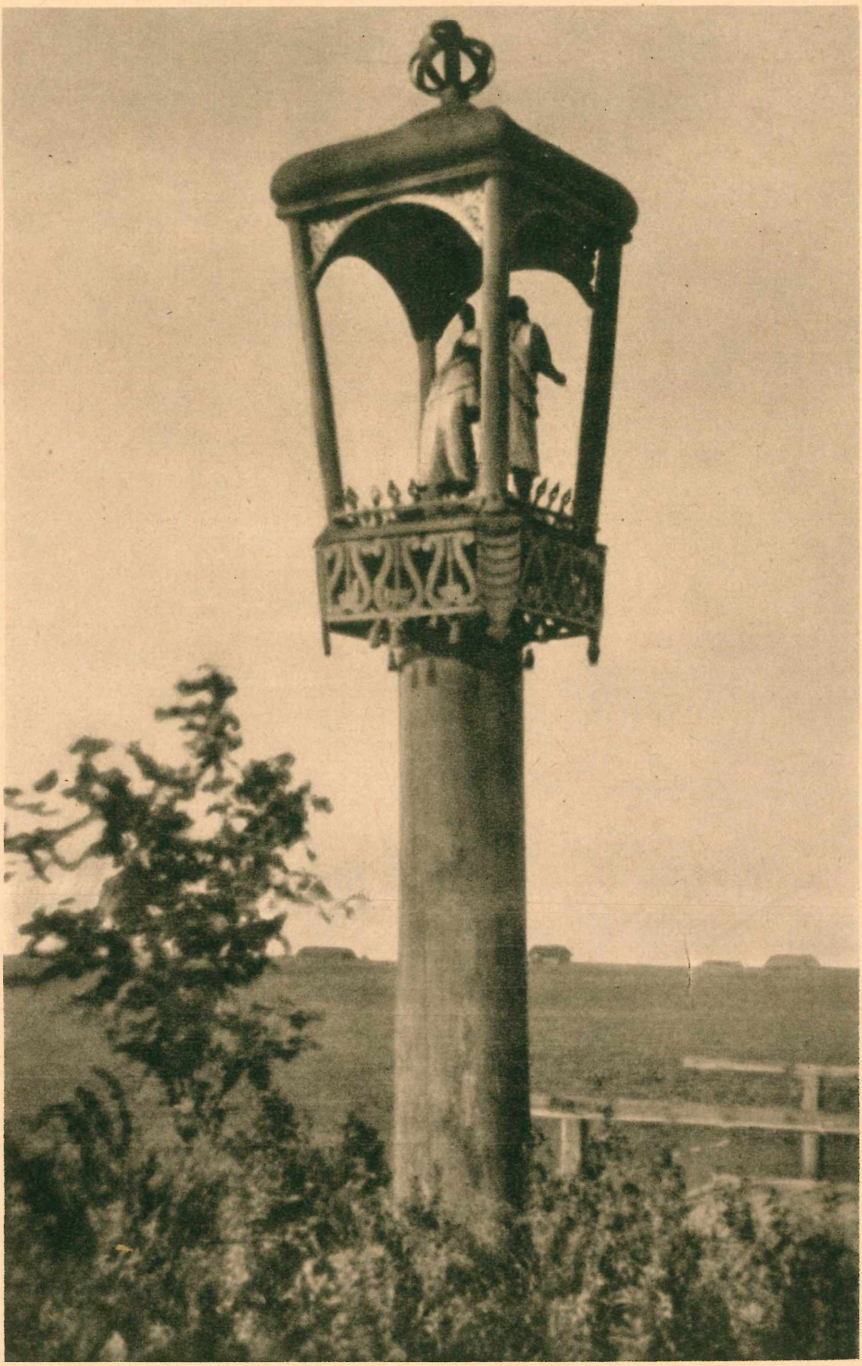
15. Wooden Cross

District of Švenčionys

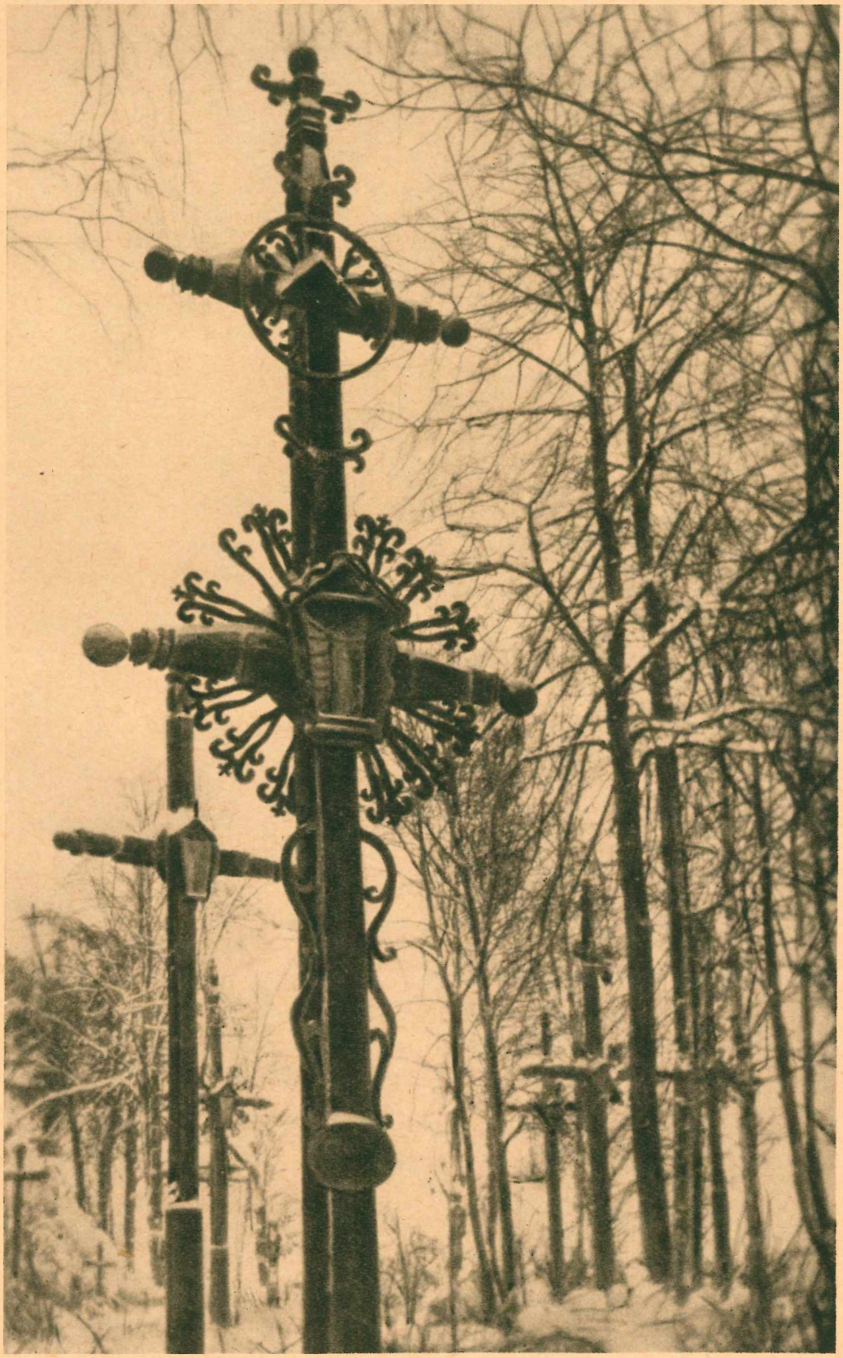


16. Wooden Chapel

District of Rokiškis

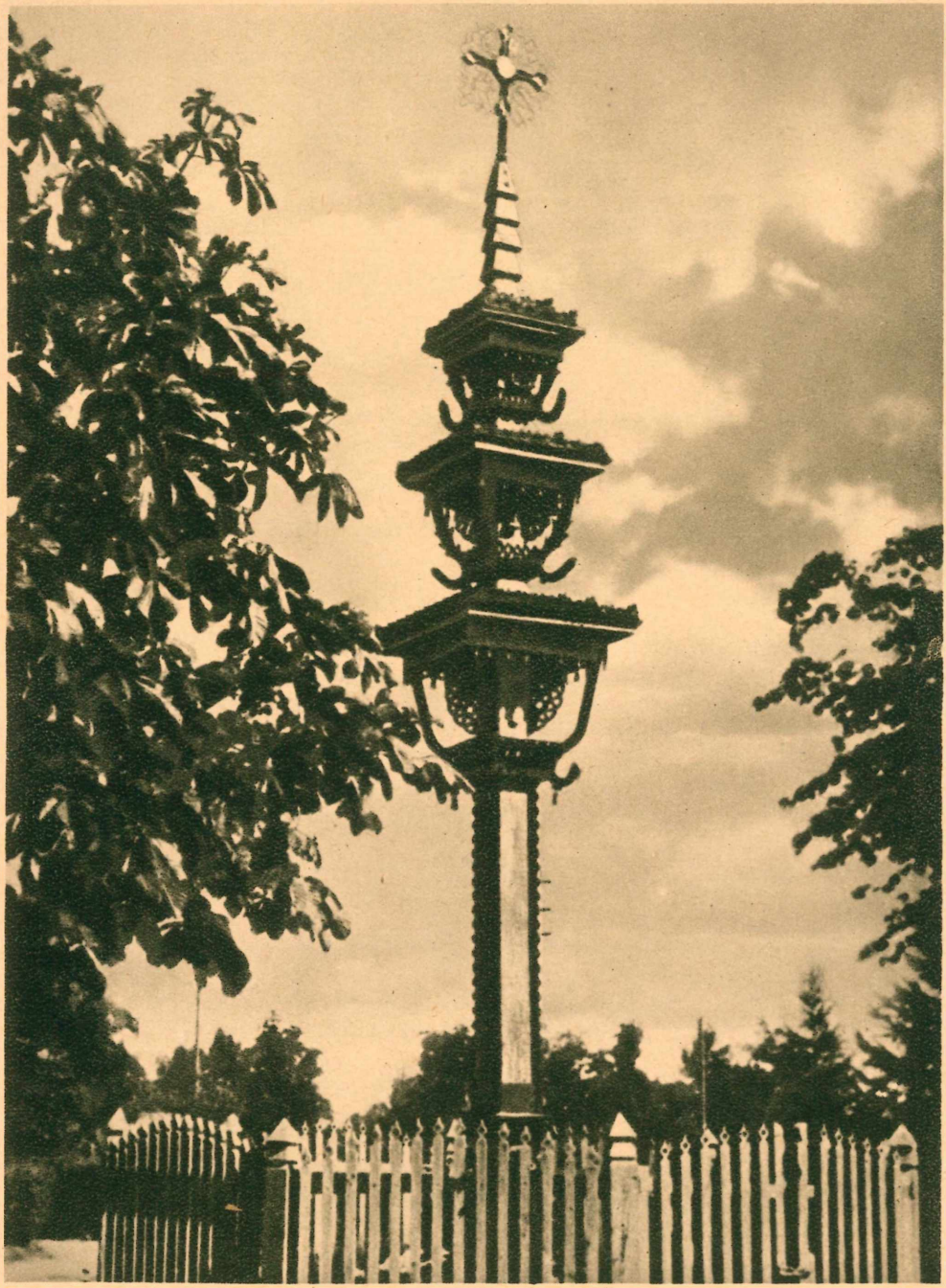


17. Wooden Cross
District of Tauragė



18. Wooden Cross

Reconstructed from an old model



19. St. Casimir

Wooden sculpture

20. St. Anton

Wooden sculpture

21. St. John Nepomuk

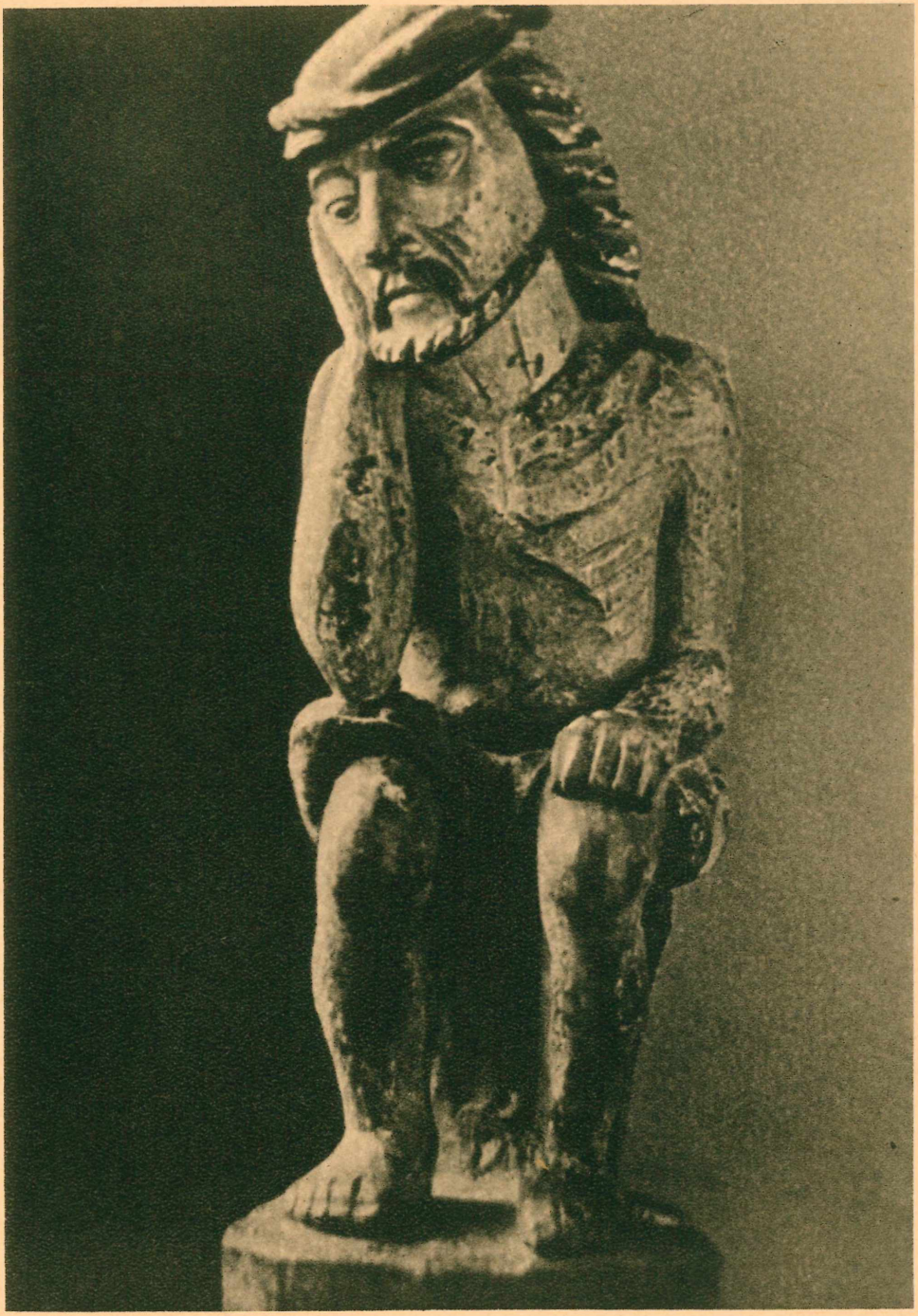
Wooden sculpture

22. "Rūpintojėlis"
Wooden sculpture

23. "Rūpintojėlis"

Wooden sculpture

24. "Rūpintojėlis"
Wooden sculpture



25. Pieta

Wooden sculpture

26. St. George and the Dragon

Wooden sculpture

27. St. Anton

Painting on wood

28. St. Barbara

Painting

29. Pieta

Painting on wood

30. St. John Nepomuk

Wood-cut, 18th cent.

· S · IANA · NEPOMVCENA ·

31. The Trinity

Wood-cut, 18th cent.

OBRAZ SWIENTY TROICI

32. St. John Nepomuk, St. Ignace, St. Joseph, St. Barbara and St. Apolonia

Wood-cut

OBRAZ S. JANA NEPO S. JOZEFA S. BARBARY I S. IGNACECO. XJEZO S. APOLONIJ

33. Virgin from Loretto

Wood-cut, 18th cent.

SANCTA
MARIA
LAVRE
TANA

34. St. Catherine

Wood-cut, 18th cent.

SCATHA

35. St. Anna

Wood-cut, 18th cent.

SANA

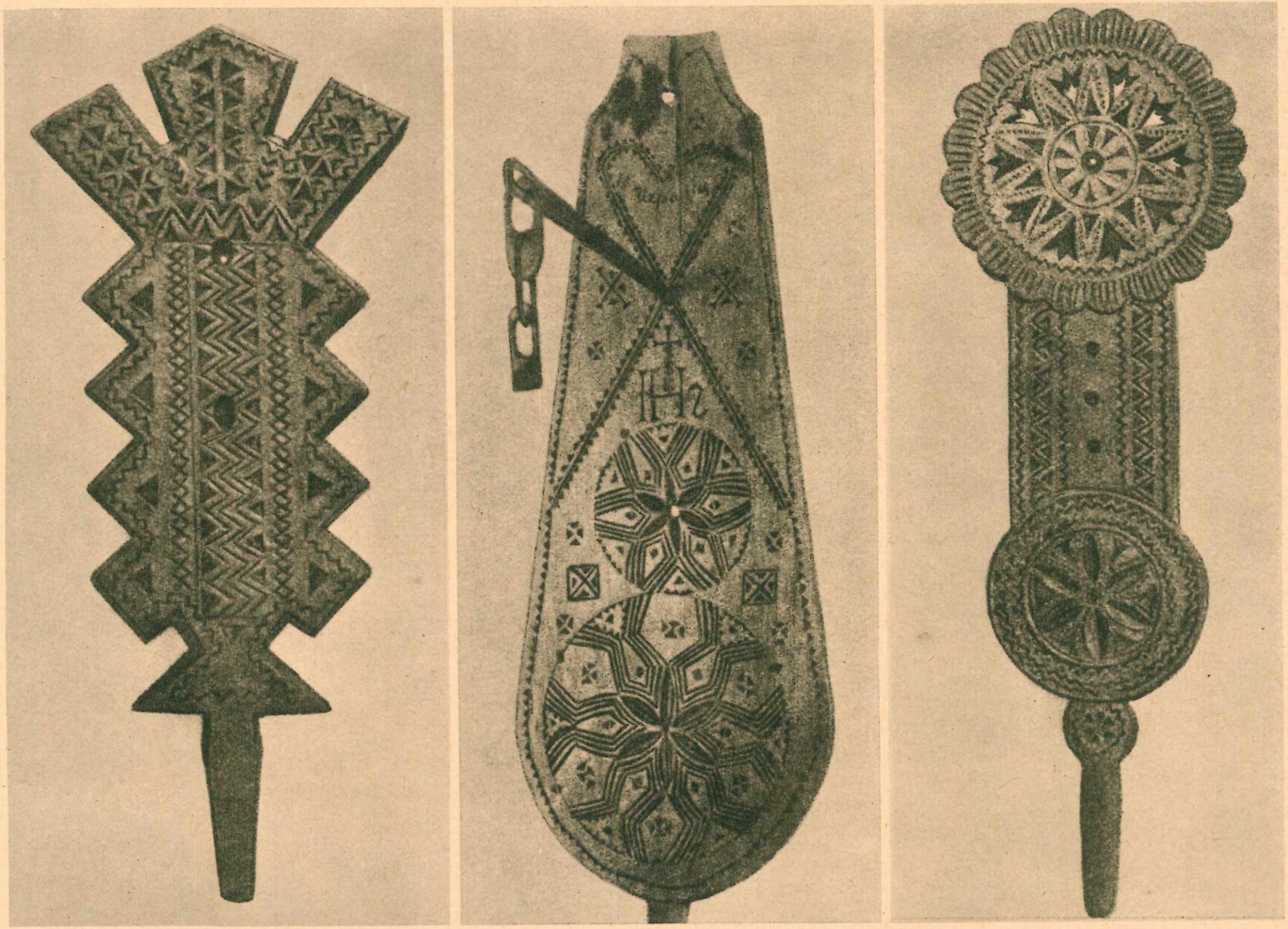
36. St. George and the Dragon

Wood-cut

OBRAZ S: JERZEGO PATRONA WIELKIEGO XIENSTWA LITEWSKIEGO RP 1710

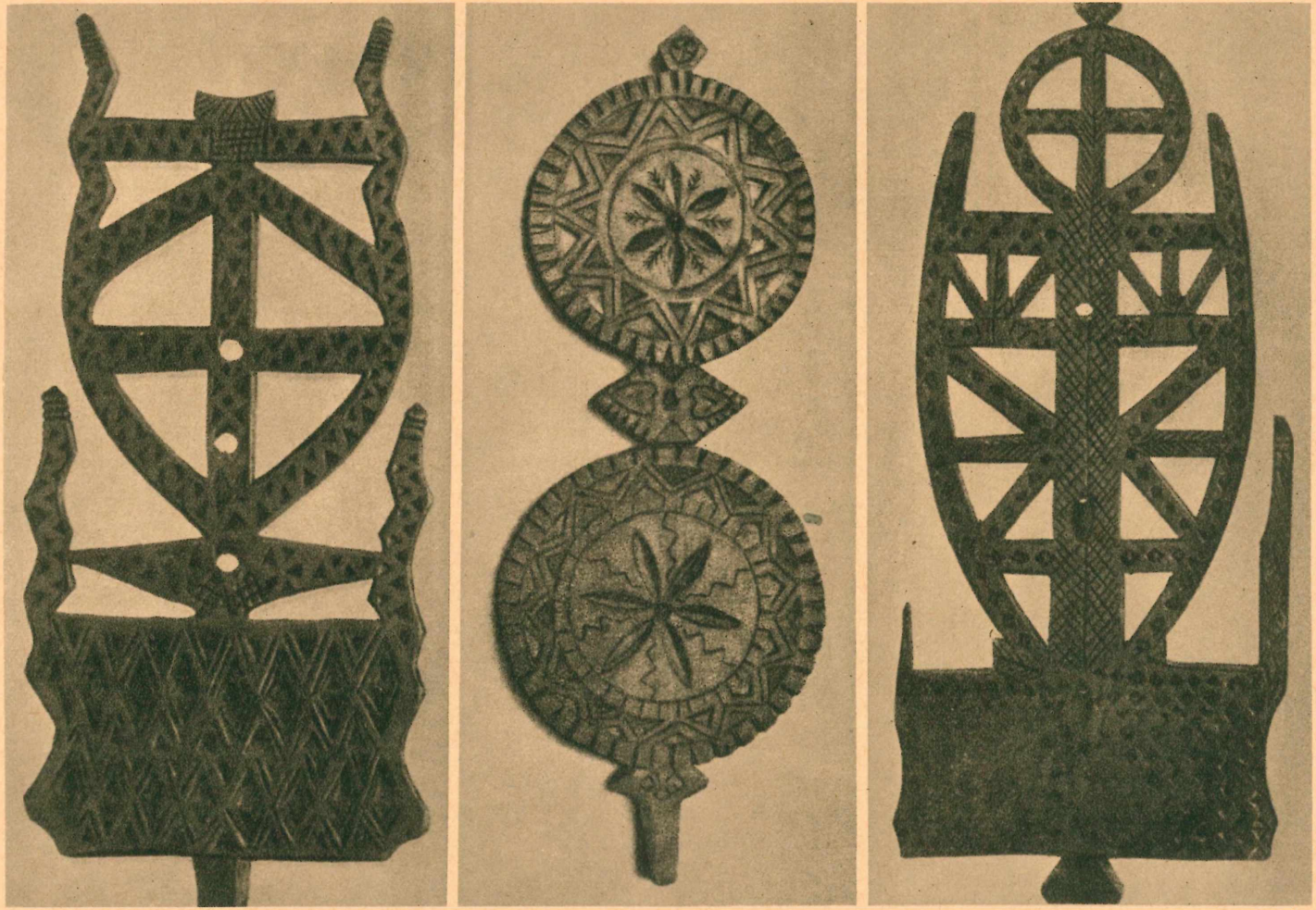
37.-39. Carved Distaves

Used on a spinning-wheel



40.-42. Carved Distaves

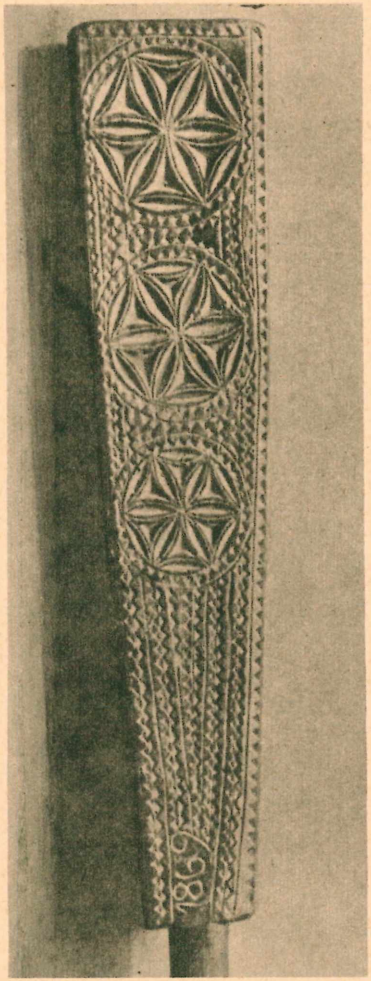
Used on a spinning-wheel

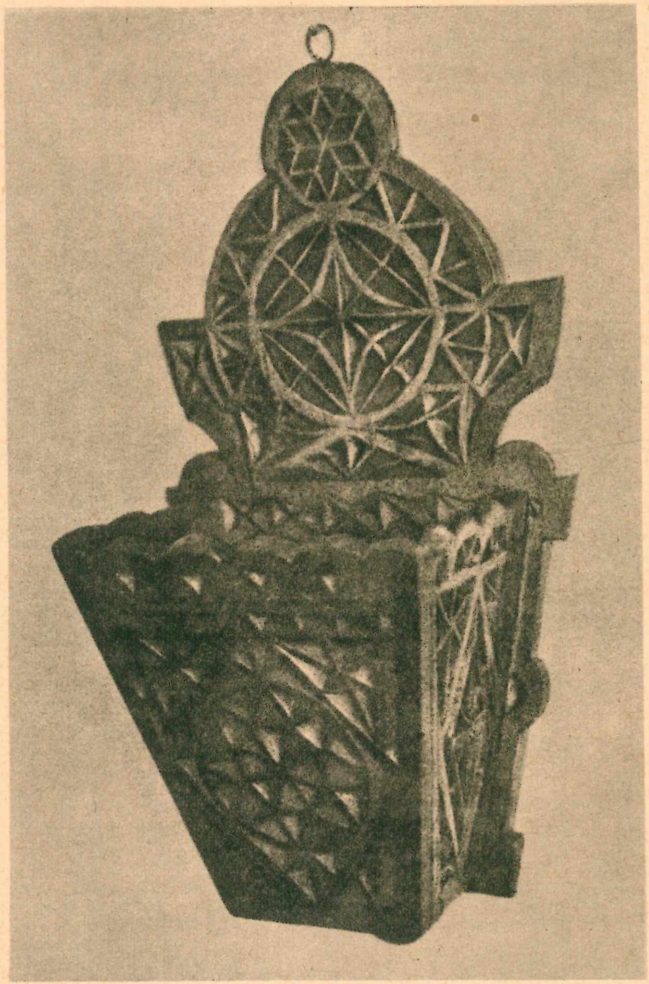


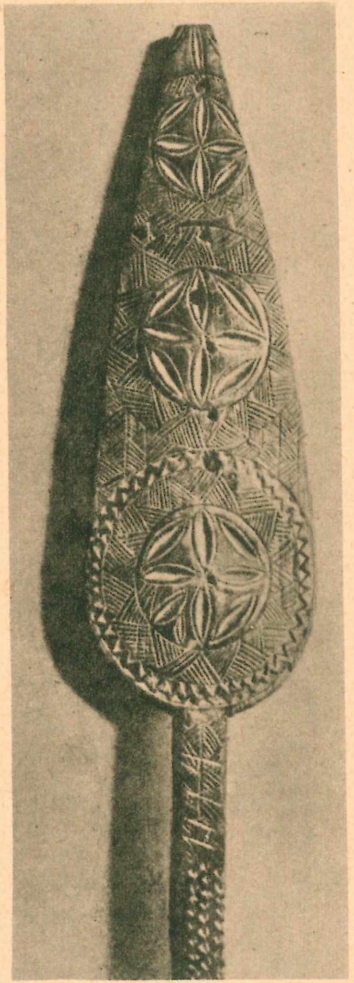
43. A carved Wash-Fulling
(Left picture)

44. An old Salt-Box
Wood-carved

45. A carved Distaff
(Right picture)

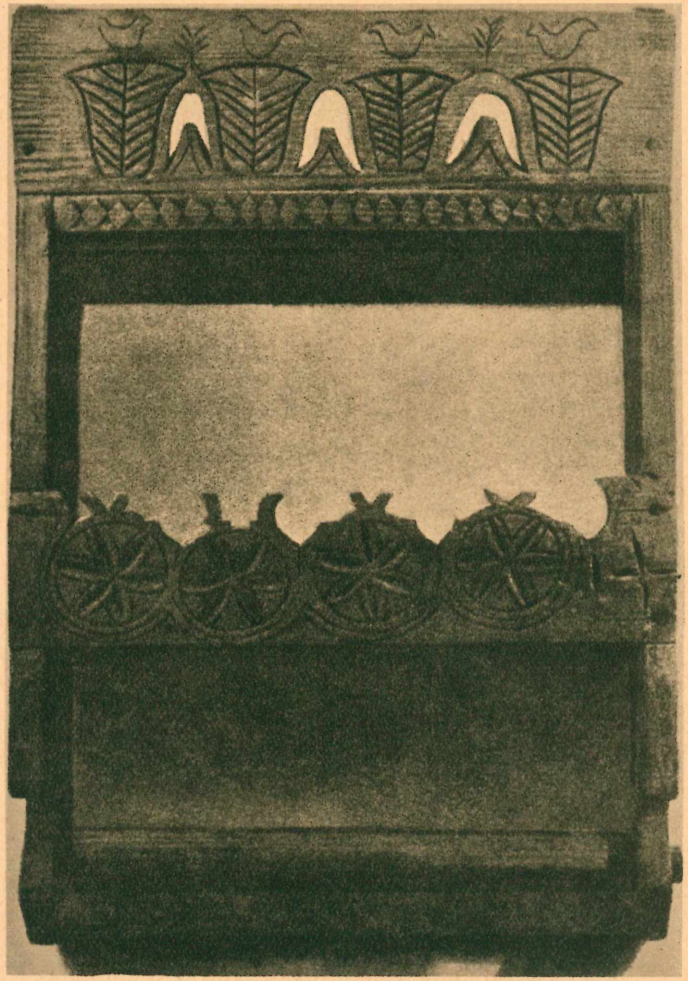






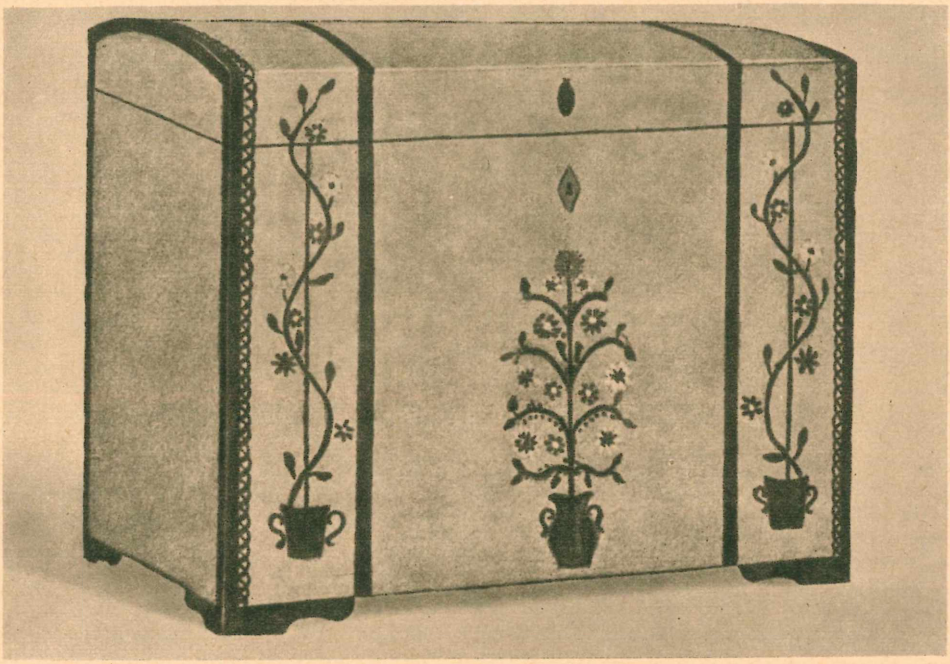
46.-47. Old Towel-Racks

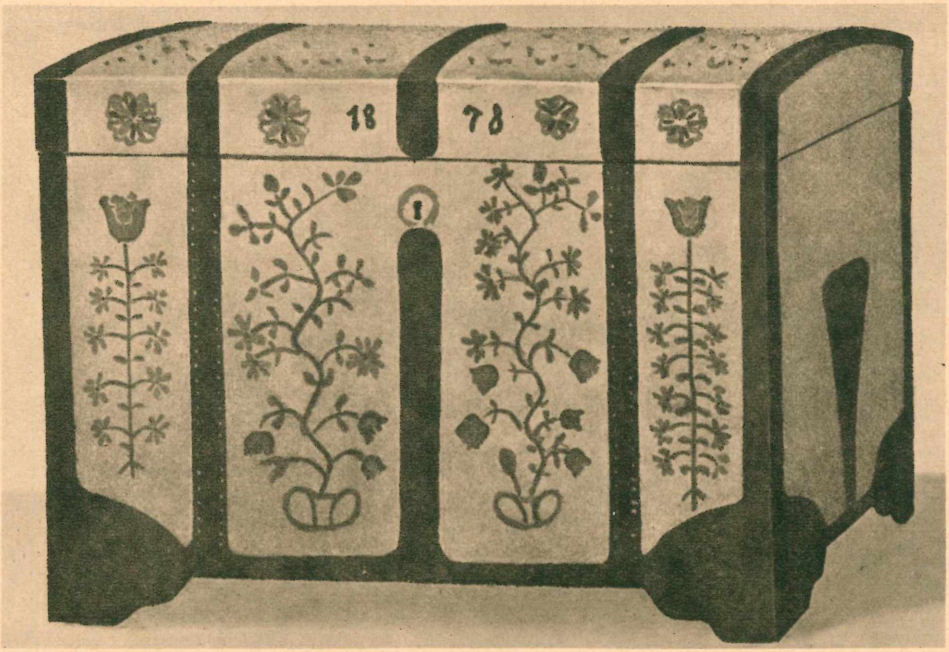
Wood-carved



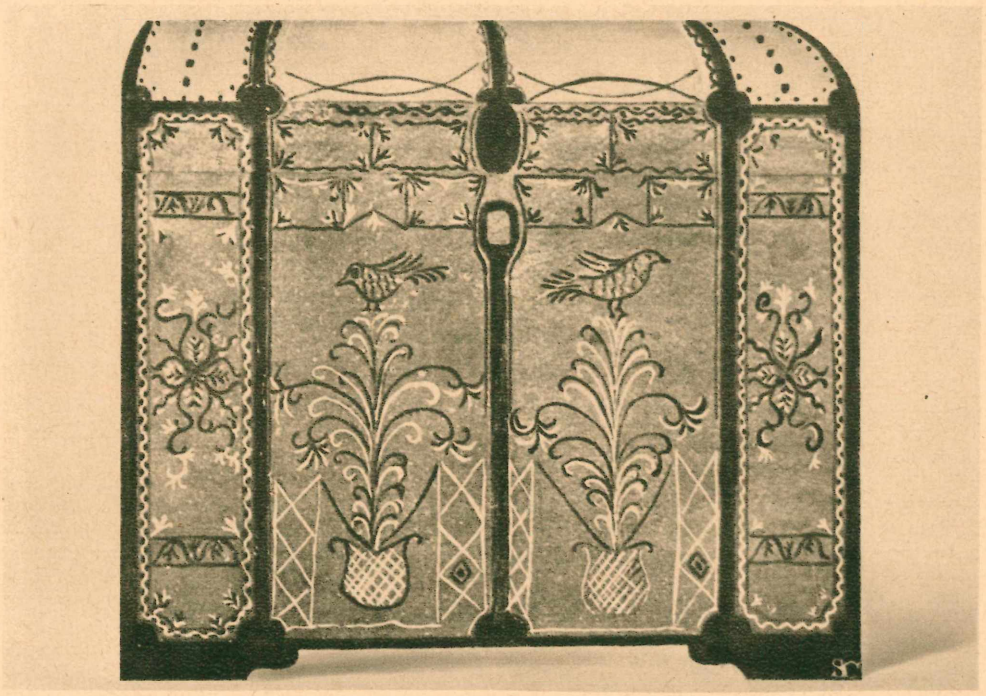
48.-49. Painted Hope-Chests

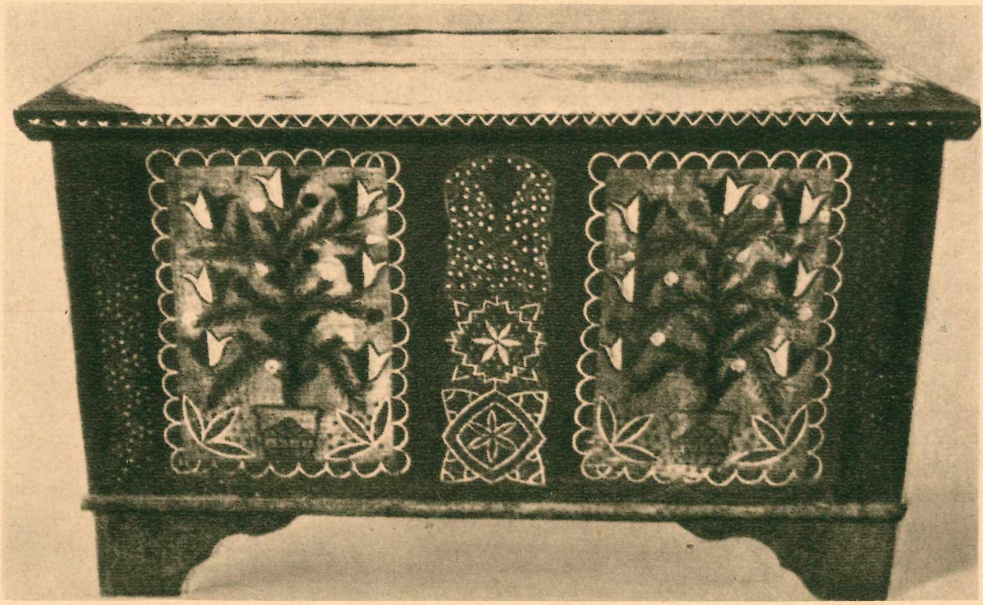
District of Utena




18
78

50.-51. Painted Hope-Chests
District of Utena and Raseiniai





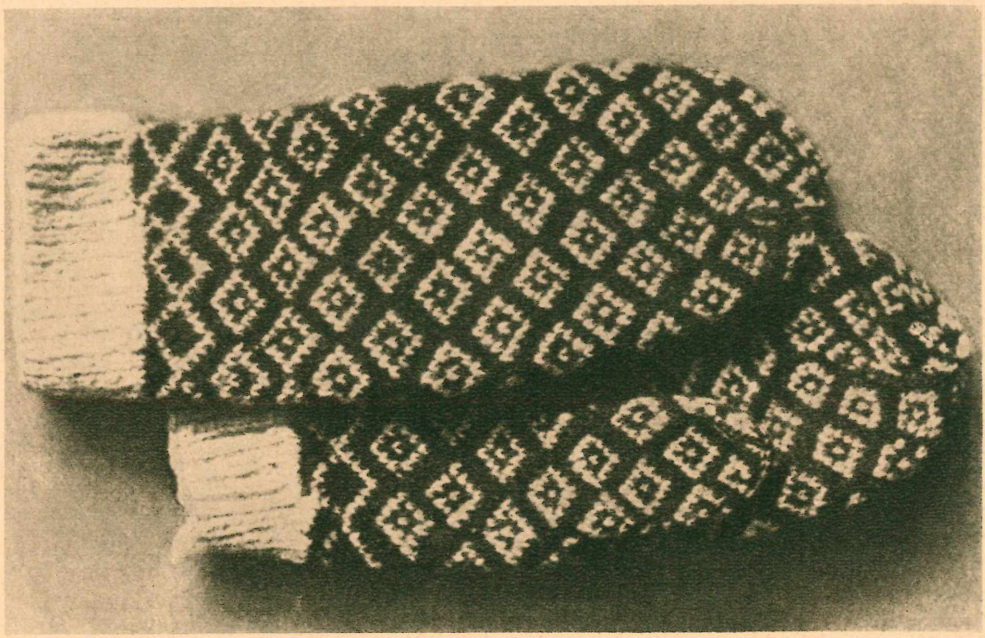
52.-53. Clay-Jug and Waterpot
District of Šiauliai and Ukmergė

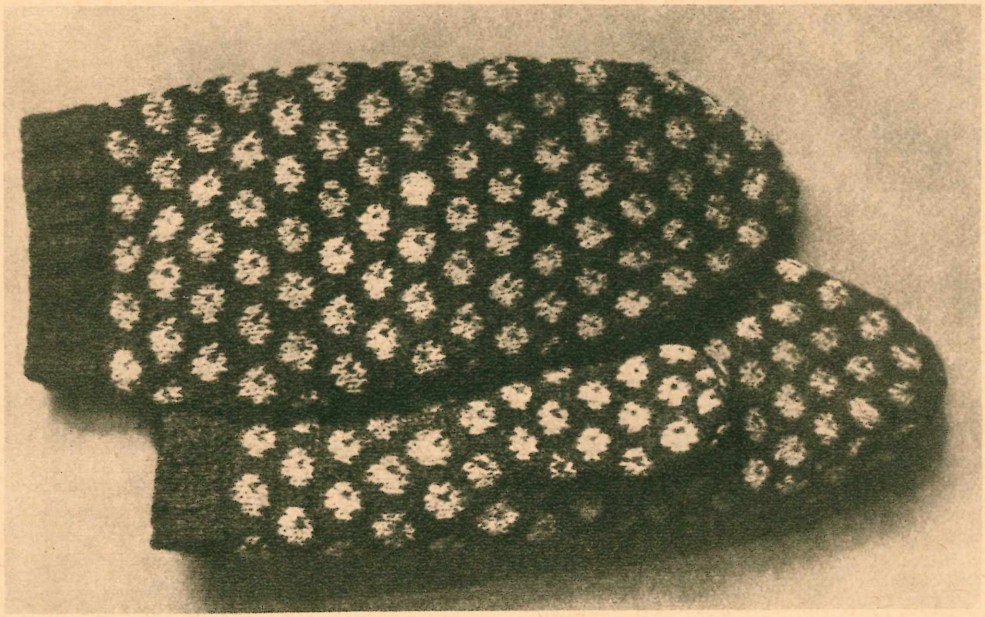
54.-55. Clay-Jugs
District of Biržai

56. Various Clay Workings

57. Painted Clay Pitchers and Plate

58.-59. Gloves
District of Telšiai





60.-61. Gloves

District of Telšiai and Klaipėda

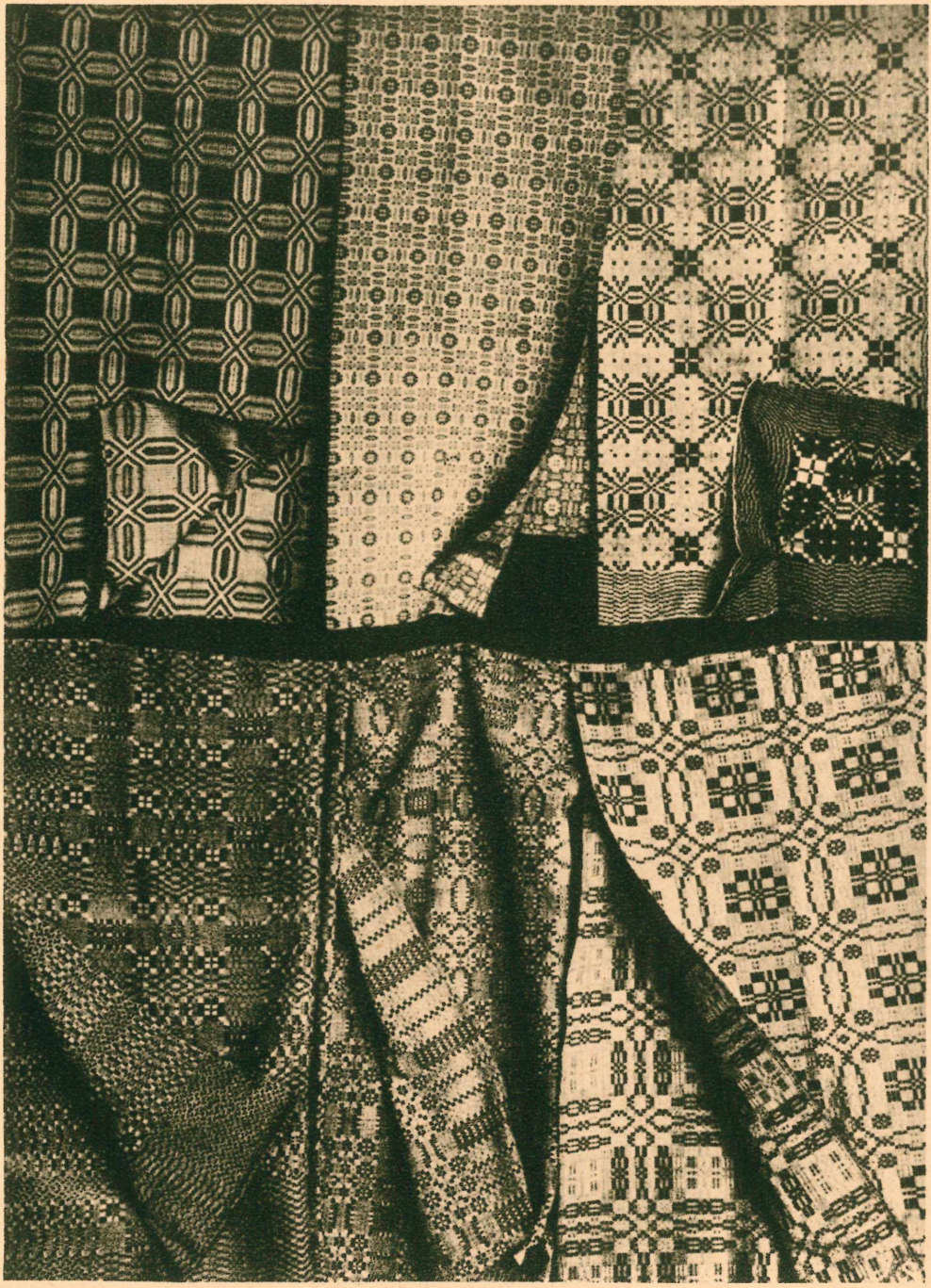
62. Socks

District of Kretinga

63. Carpet Design

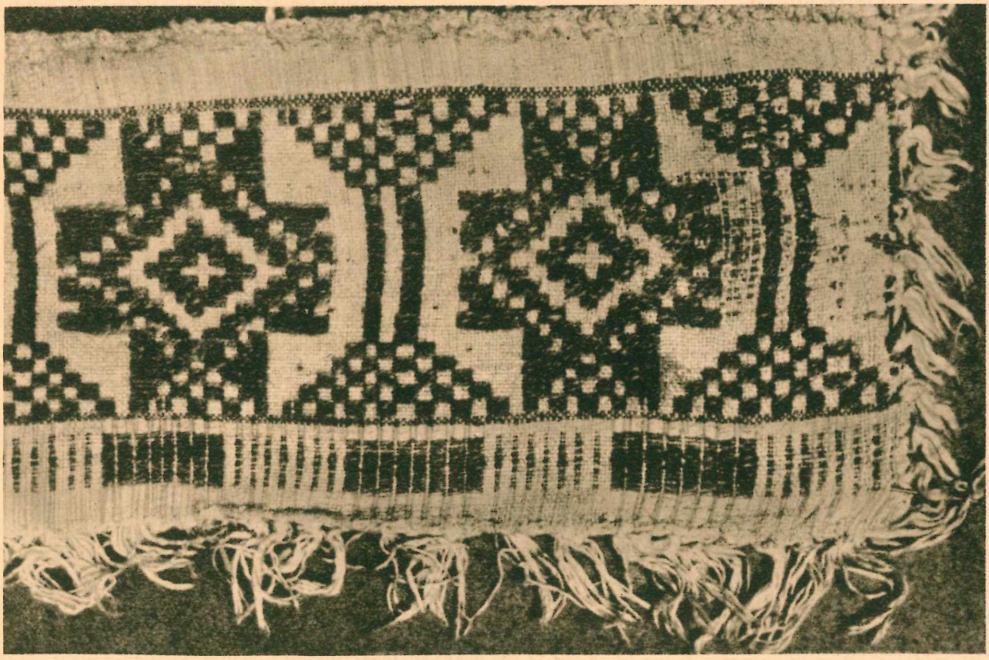
64. Various Towel Patterns

65. Tablecloths



66. Bed Coverings

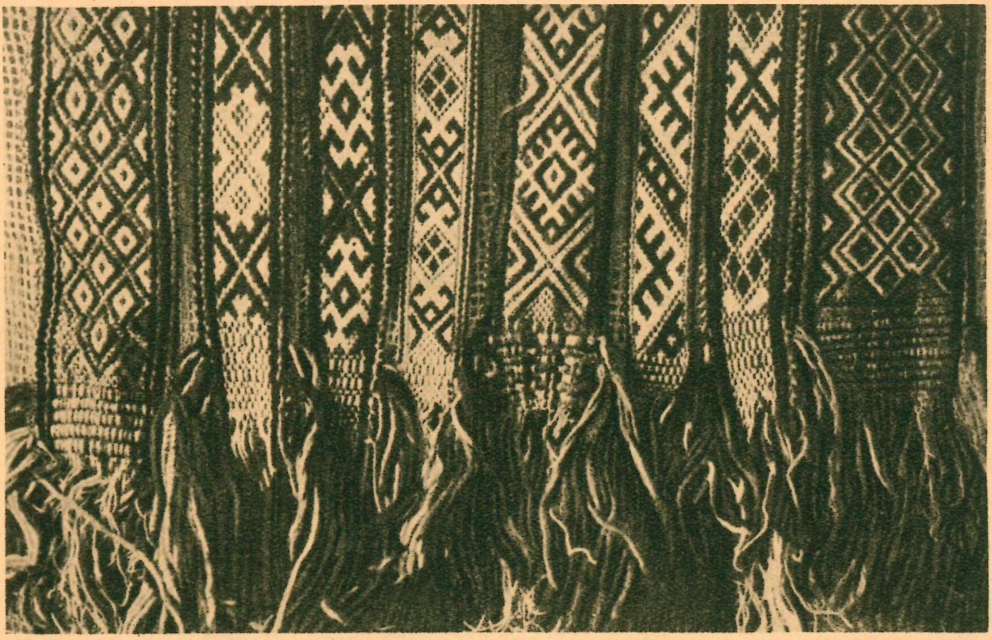
67.-68. Borders of Bed-Sheets

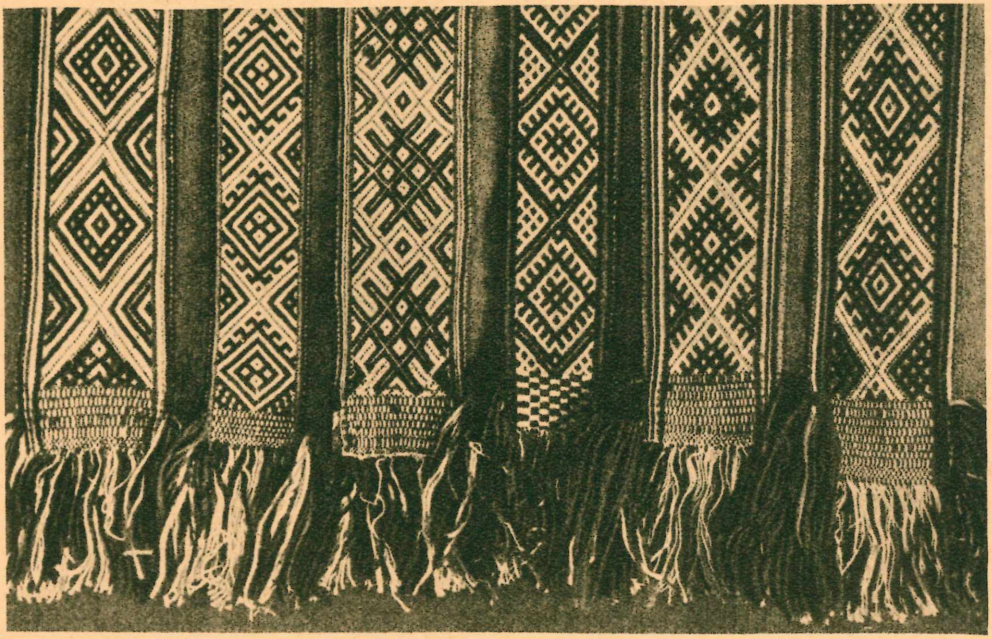


69. Belts

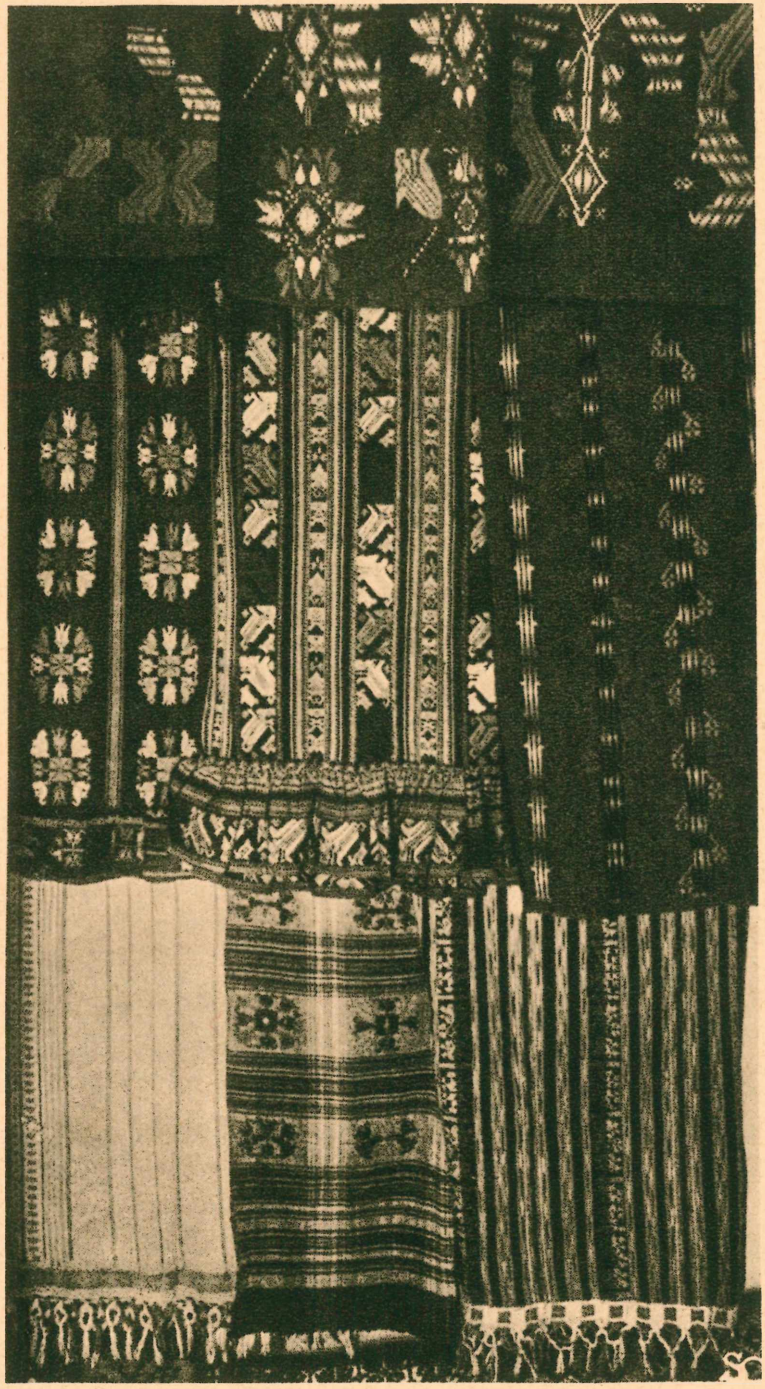
70.-71. Belts

72.-73. Belts

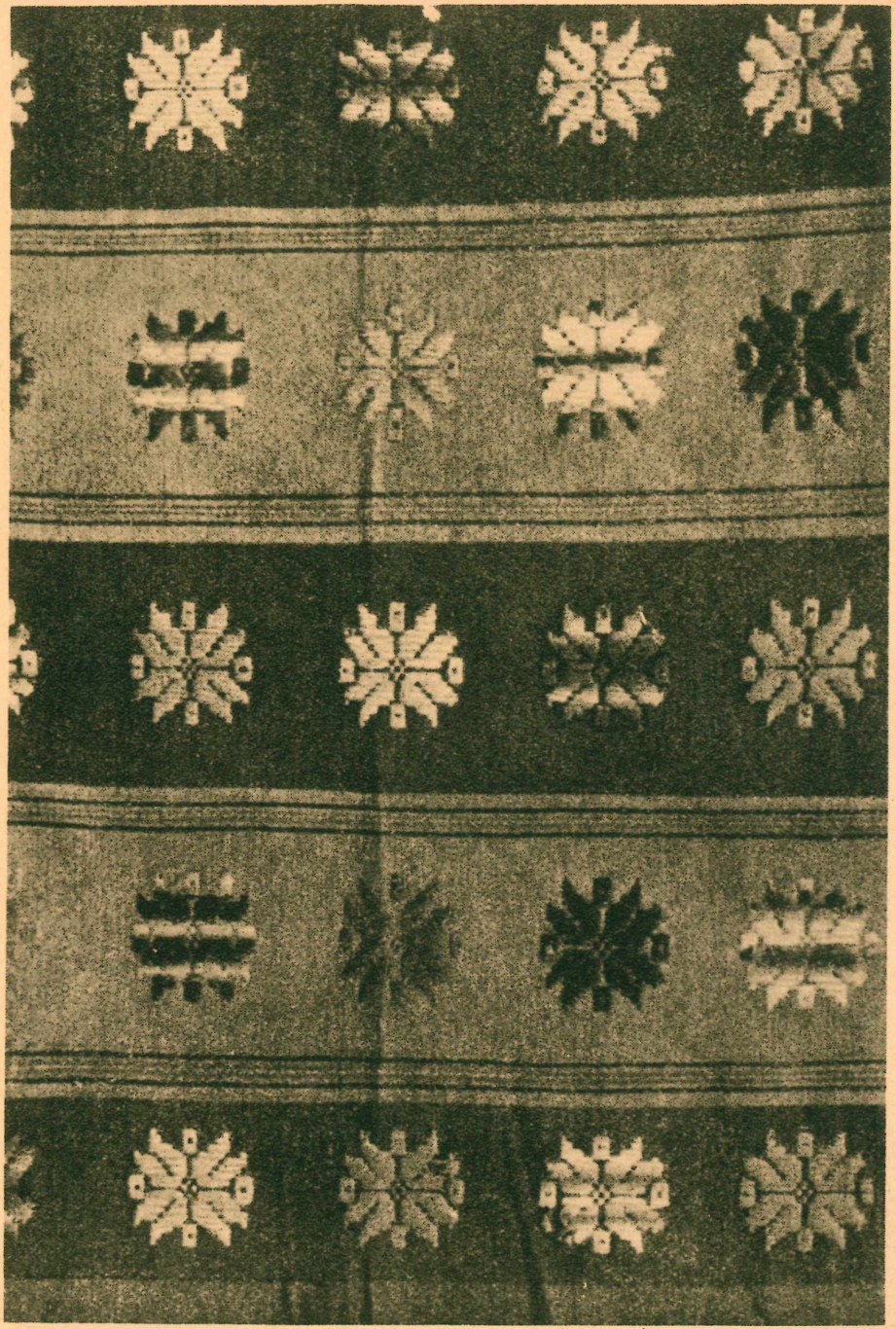




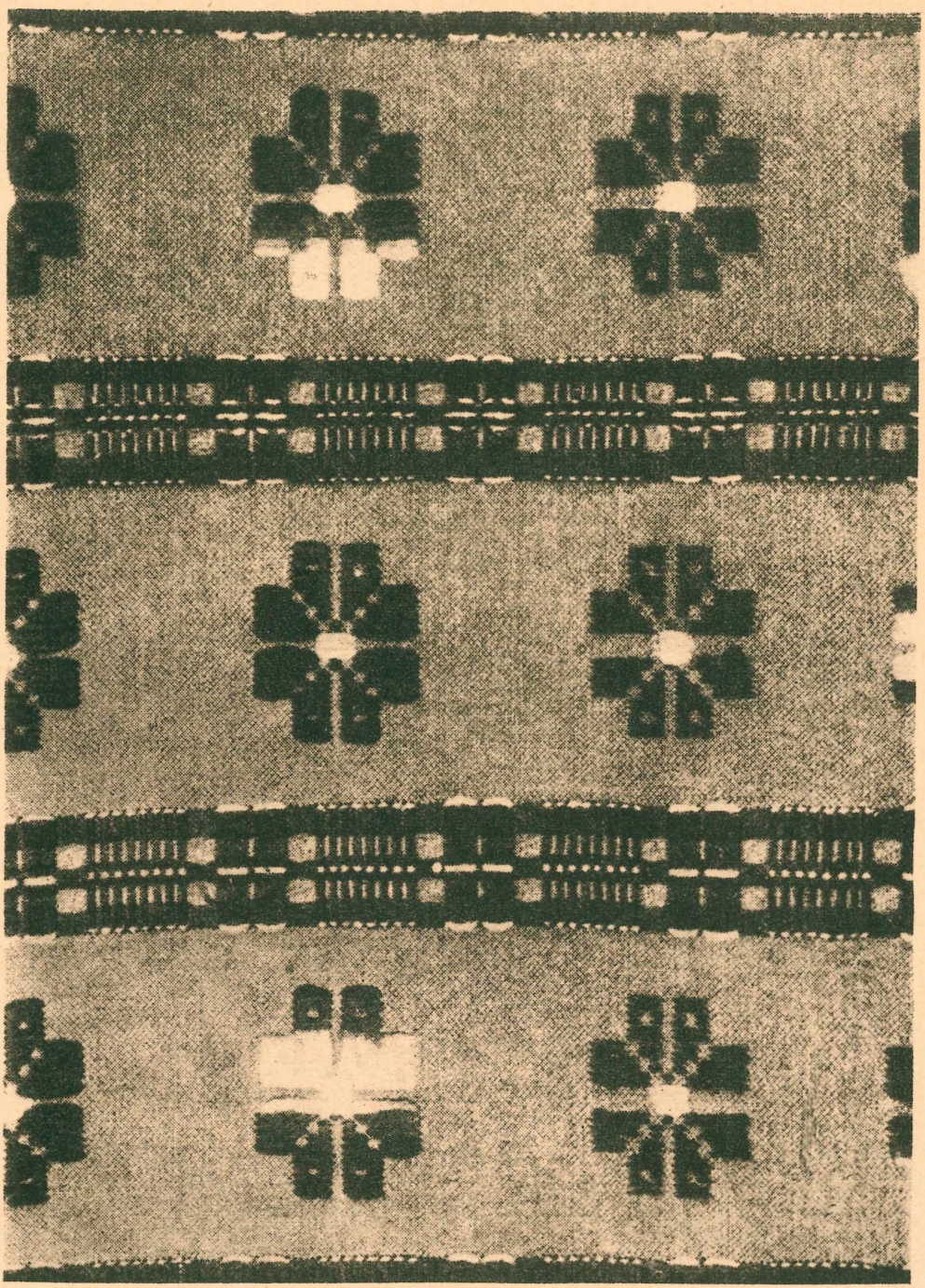
74. Aprons



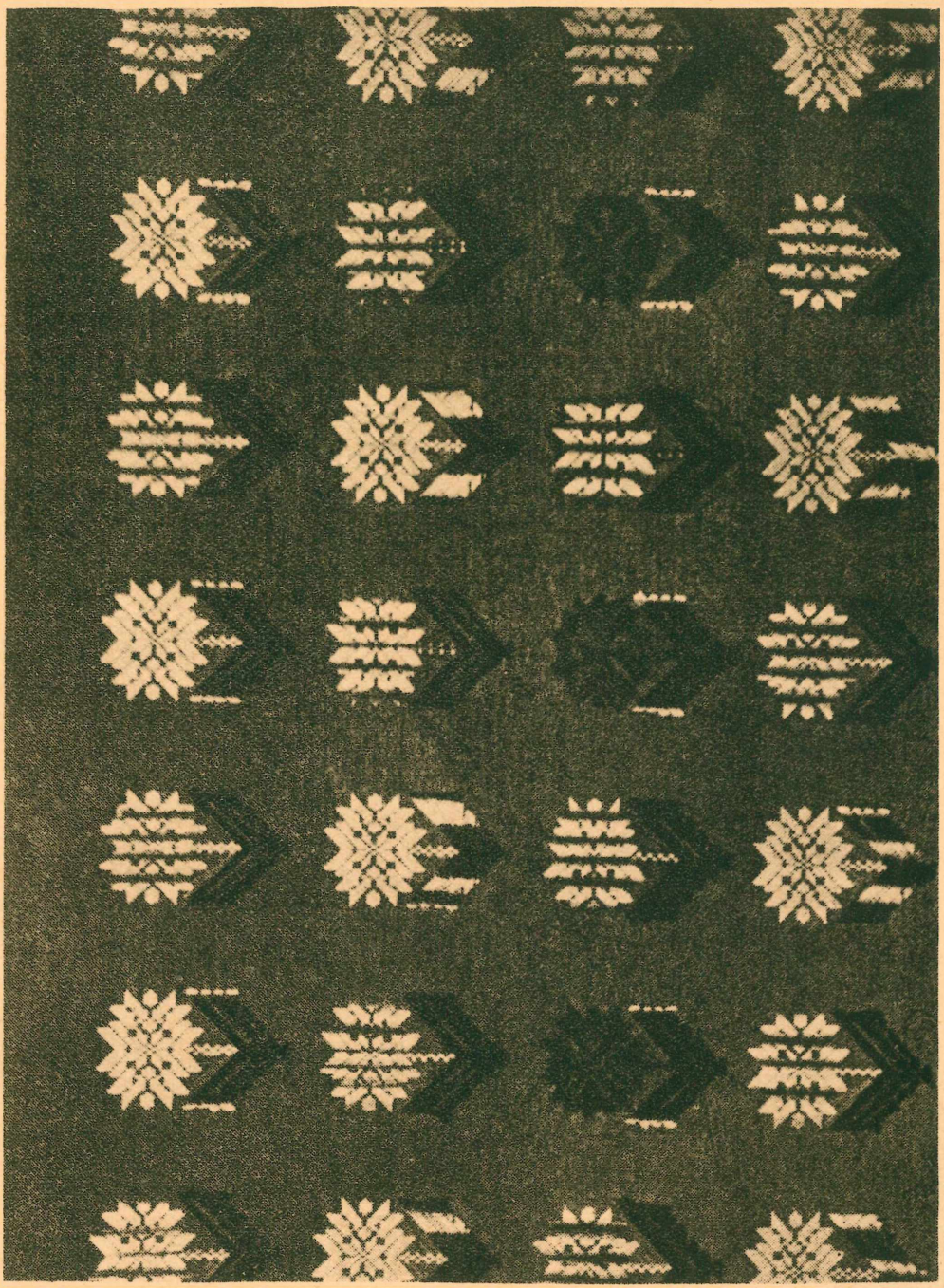
75. Apron-Design



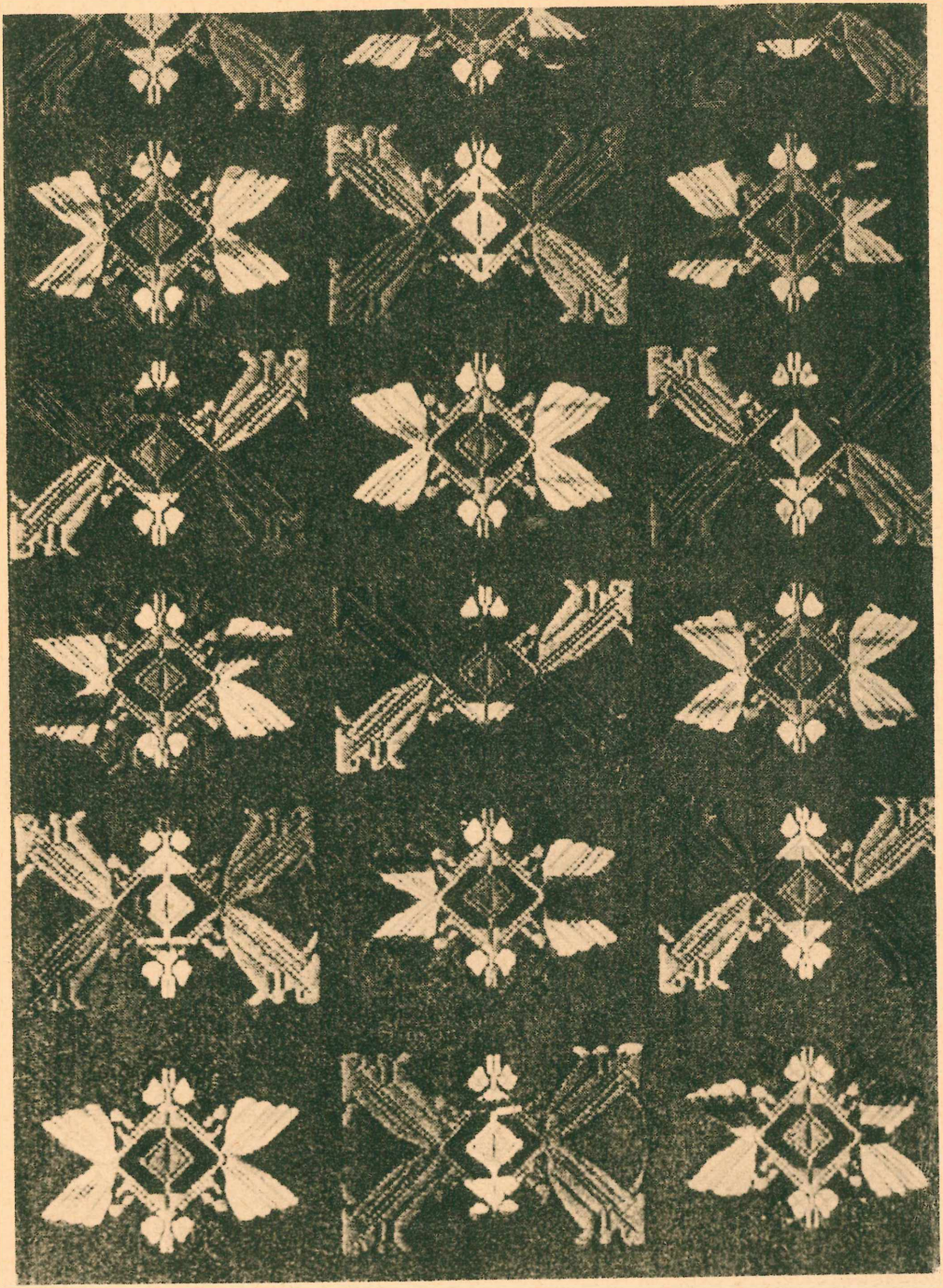
76. Apron-Design



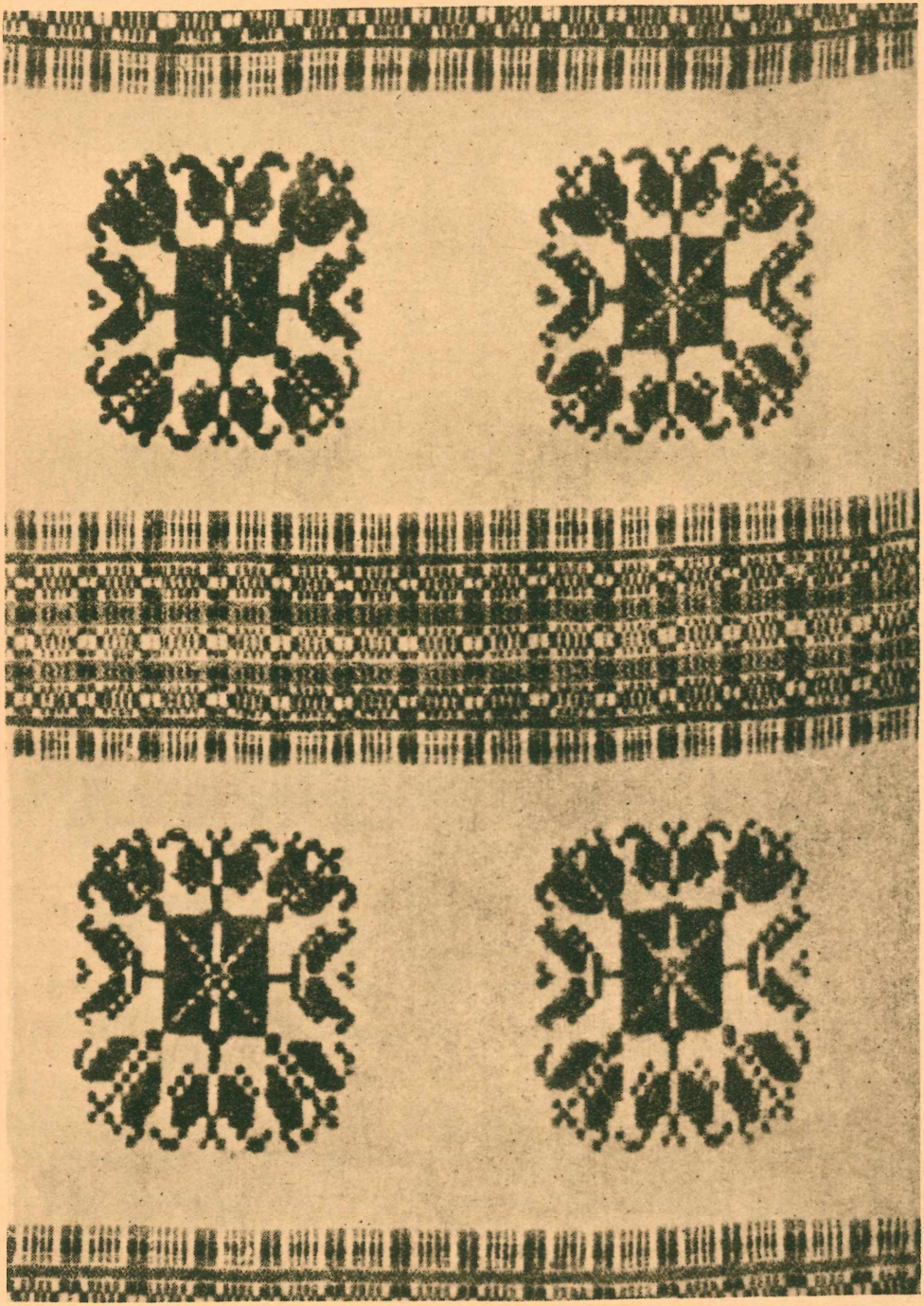
77. Apron-Design



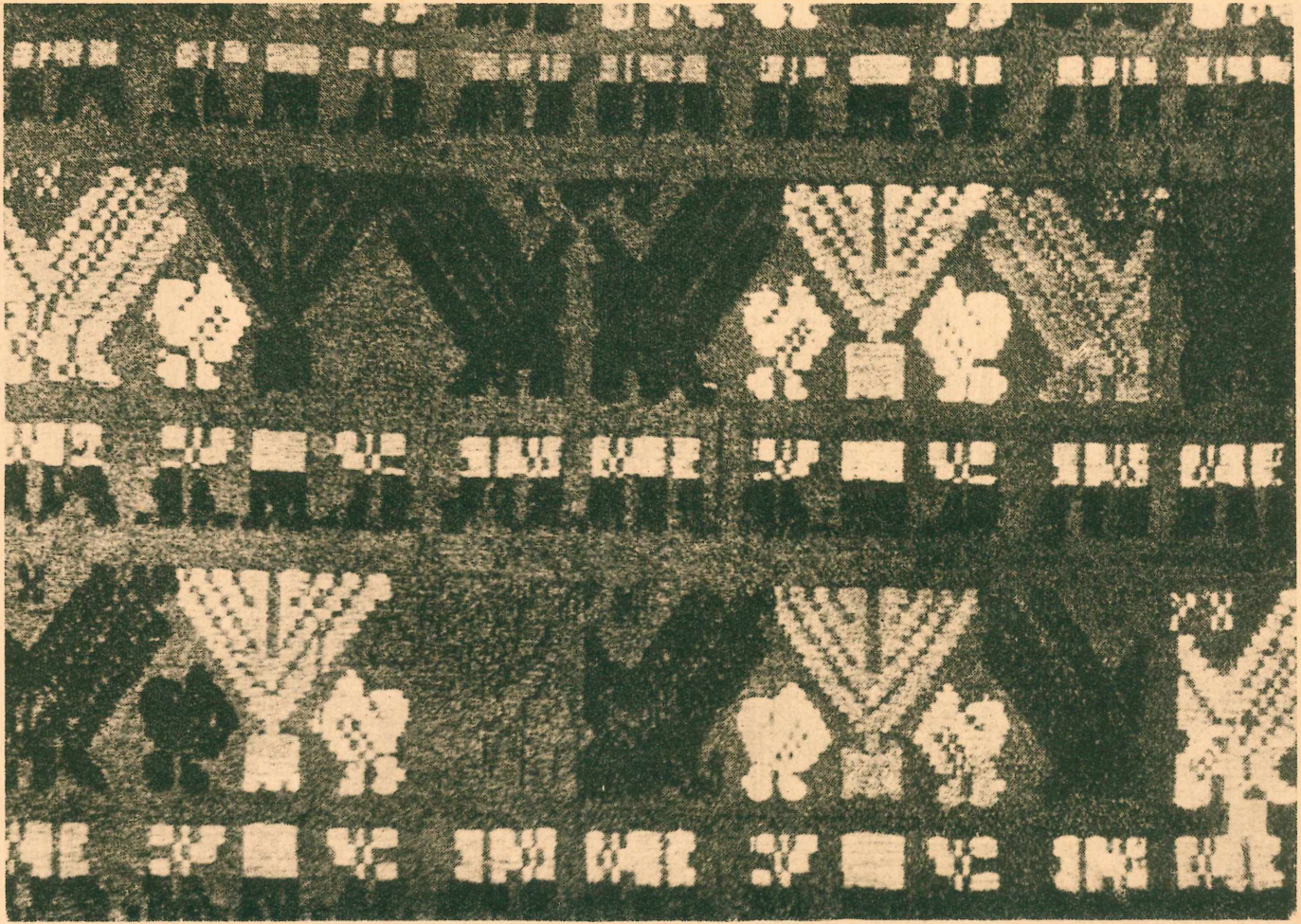
78. Apron-Design



79. Apron-Design



80. Apron-Design



81. Apron-Design

82. Apron-Design